

SEVEN PSYCHOPATHS

by

Martin McDonagh

EXT. LA STREETCORNER. - DAY

TOMMY and LARRY, two Mafia hitmen. At some point in their conversation, an inconsequential FIGURE from the distant background slowly approaches.

TOMMY

Was it Dillinger got shot thru the eyeball, or am I thinking of somebody else?

LARRY

Moe Green got shot thru the eyeball in 'The Godfather'.

TOMMY

Yeah, I'm talking about in real life.

LARRY

Oh.

TOMMY

Somebody in real life, got shot thru the eyeball...

LARRY

Who was that..?

TOMMY

Well,.. No, Larry, many people in real life have got shot thru the eyeball. I'm just saying I think Dillinger was one of 'em.

LARRY

That's really good aim.

TOMMY

No, that ain't really good aim.

LARRY

How is that not really good aim?

TOMMY

That's a hundred fucking cops shooting a thousand bullets a minute, one of em's bound to go thru somebody's fucking eyeball.

LARRY

Oh.

(pause)

Eyeball, eyeball, eyeball, eyeball..?

TOMMY

You ever shoot a guy in his eyeball?

LARRY

I stabbed a guy in his ear once. Icepick. Right in his fucking ear.

TOMMY

Yeah, see, that'd be a different subject. That'd be 'ears'.

LARRY

What's the matter with you?

TOMMY

Nothing's the matter with me.

LARRY

You nervous cos we're killing a chick?

TOMMY

Yeah, look at me, I'm shaking. I got the chick-killing-shakes.

They tense, as if someone is leaving the building they're watching. They relax again. The FIGURE from the background is still approaching. He is wearing a ski-mask.

TOMMY

The last thing the boss says to me, he says, "Tommy, the moment I first saw Mari's eyes I knew it, I knew it was love, I knew I was fucked, and lo, and behold, I was. So, Tommy, the moment after you kill her, please, shoot her fucking eyeballs out." Those were his exact words.

LARRY

Yeah, well, I got one exact word for that. 'Overkill'.

TOMMY

I got two exact words for that. 'Here here'.

LARRY

I got three exact words for that. 'You're damn fucking straight!'

(pause)

I guess "He who pays the Piper... He who pays the Piper gets to have his girlfriend shot thru the fucking eyeballs."

(MORE)

LARRY (cont'd)

(pause)

So that's what put you in mind of Dillinger and the eyeball thing. I see.

TOMMY

Life's parade of shot-thru-the-eyeball people.

LARRY

What happened to Mahatma Gandhi? Did he...?

TOMMY

No.

LARRY

Are you sure?

TOMMY

I know he got murdered. Nothing happened to his eyeballs.

(pause)

His name was 'Mohandas' anyway.

(pause)

In Cuba, the torturers used to have a device, two thin metal spikes, placed here, that they adjusted and slowly, millimeter by millimeter, pricked... pricked into the eyeballs.

LARRY

You're kidding me? Those Communist motherfuckers.

TOMMY

Um, well, no, Larry. These were the ones those Communist motherfuckers kicked out.

LARRY

What is it with you today, Tommy? First it's should we or shouldn't we shoot this chick thru the eyeballs, and second it's you're gone soft on Castro all of a sudd..

On 'SUDDEN' the background FIGURE reaches the men and shoots both their fucking heads off. Their bodies collapse. He drops playing cards on each of them, both the Jack of Diamonds.

The FIGURE stands looking at his dead handiwork, in no hurry to leave. FLASH ON TITLE CARD - PSYCHOPATH NO. 1. ... as he finally turns and slowly walks away the way he came.

INT. KAYA'S APARTMENT - DAY

LIVING ROOM. KAYA, 23, a beautiful woman of Asian/Hispanic descent, reading to quiet music.

BEDROOM. MARTY, her boyfriend, good-looking but puffy-eyed after a night of boozing, wakes, listens to the music, looks at an empty bottle on floor. Doorbell rings. He grimaces.

LIVING-ROOM. KAYA, irritated, opens the door to reveal BILLY, who smiles despite a bruised cheek and cut lip.

BILLY

Hiya Kaya!

KAYA

Martin's writing today, Billy.

BILLY

Oh. Should I just stand out here in the hall like a dick, then?

She sighs, leaves the door open. He enters.

BEDROOM. KAYA throws some clothes on. MARTY lies there in pain talking to BILLY leaning in the doorway.

MARTY

What happened to you?

BILLY

I got into a fight at my audition.

MARTY

Who with this time?!

BILLY

Oh, y'know,... The director guy.

KAYA

(sighing)

I'm going to work.

MARTY

Are you pissed at me, baby?

KAYA

Why would I be pissed at you, Marty?

KAYA brushes past BILLY and slams the door as she leaves.

BILLY

Because you're a cunt?

MARTY

Billy!!

INT. DINER- DAY

BILLY eating, MARTY with just a shake, nursing his hangover.

MARTY

I don't remember doing anything to piss her off.

BILLY

She's probably pissed at ya not for anything specific, more because, y'know, she's a fucking bitch.

MARTY

She ain't a fucking bitch, Billy. She's just got issues.

BILLY

Yeah, she's got 'being a fucking bitch' issues. Like, how comes I'm your best friend and I haven't been invited to her party Friday night?

MARTY

Oh. Oh. How come you're my best friend and you haven't been invited to her party Friday night? Well, mostly cos... Well, mostly cos my girlfriend's a fucking bitch.

BILLY

Oh-h! I see. I thought maybe she just had issues or something.

MARTY

No, no. She's a fucking bitch.

BILLY

I see.

MARTY

So you wanna come to our party Friday? You can bring your imaginary girlfriend.

BILLY

My girlfriend isn't imaginary, ok? She exists. She just doesn't like going out much. I like it. It means I don't have to take her nowhere.

MARTY

What's she got, agoraphobia or something?

BILLY shrugs like he doesn't give a fuck.

MARTY

And how are things in the dog-kidnapping business?

BILLY

Shhh! I'm just helping out a friend while his wife's sick, that's all.

EXT. PARK - DAY

BILLY on a bench, an art-portfolio satchel beside him, lazily scanning the park. A BLONDE WOMAN with a basset yapping about her heels, chats to a cute stranger.

INT. DOG WAREHOUSE - DAY

Thirteen dogs in well-kept cages, all happy. HANS (50's), poor but neatly dressed, with a cravat, reading a pamphlet on breast cancer. He stops and caresses the unhappiest dog.

EXT. PARK - DAY

BLONDE looking around for her dog, distraught. In the distance, BILLY apes looking for it too, portfolio balanced against his leg, behind which the basset is chomping on some meat, a dog-cage hanging over him like a Sword of Damocles.

INT. DOG WAREHOUSE - DAY

BILLY bursts in smiling with the basset. HANS smiles too.

EXT. RICH LA STREET - DAY

Tearful BLONDE pins posters to telegraph poles

POSTER - basset photo, a description, and a \$500 reward.

EXT. RICH HOUSE - DAY

Finger presses bell. Door opens, BLONDE's sad face turns to joy as HANS is revealed on the doorstep, basset in his arms.

A few seconds later, HANS refusing the reward money, then begrudgingly accepting, leaving the BLONDE overjoyed.

EXT. BILLY'S CAR - DAY

HANS gives BILLY half the money as he gets into the car, which pulls away.

BILLY

Where you wanna go, Hans, now we're back in the money?

HANS

Um... The cancer ward, Billy, if you don't mind.

BILLY

One cancer ward coming right up!

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM- DAY

HANS' black wife, MYRA, ill in bed. Another woman sleeping in the single bed beside hers. HANS shows MYRA the reward money.

HANS

Five hundred bucks, baby. A blond lady with a basset hound.

MYRA

(looking away)

When you gonna get a job that ain't just stealing from folks, Hans?

HANS

I'm a 57 year old ain't worked in twenty years, Myra. Where am I gonna get a job...?

MYRA

Government.

HANS

Government? 'A job that ain't just stealing from folks'? Government?

MYRA has to smile, despite her pain. HANS smiles too. They hold hands.

INT. KAYA'S APARTMENT - DAY

MARTY at desk with a notepad, the words 'EXT. STREET. DAY' written at the top, nothing else on it. Beside it is a title page printed in a nice font, reading 'SEVEN PSYCHOPATHS' by MARTIN HANRAHAN. He picks it up, reads it, smiles. There are no other pages behind it. He pours himself a glass of wine.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

MARTY and BILLY at a booth.

BILLY

So how's the 'Seven Psychopaths' coming along, Marty?

MARTY

Slow, slow. I got the title, y'know, and I kinda know what it's about.

BILLY

What's it about?

MARTY

It's about these seven psychopaths.
But I haven't been able to come up
with all of the psychopaths yet.

BILLY

How many you got?

MARTY

One. And he's not really a
psychopath. He's quite nice. See,
I'm sick and tired of all these
stereotypical Hollywood murderous
scumbag-type psychopaths. I want
some of mine to be more, kinda,
y'know, Buddhist.

BILLY

Buddhist?

MARTY

I want the film, overall, to be
about, well, love. I don't want it
to be one more movie about guys
with guns in their hands. I'm sick
of that. So I want it to be about
love, and peace, but it's still got
to be about these seven
psychopaths. So this Buddhist
psychopath, he doesn't believe in
violence. I don't know what the
fuck he's gonna do in the movie.

BILLY

And what happens to the psychopaths
at the end?

MARTY

I don't know what happens to them
at the start!

BILLY

I think they should all come
together at the end. I think they
should all join forces and kill off
all the bad guys.

MARTY

Well, yeah, that's kinda the exact
opposite of everything I've just
been talking about.

BILLY

I like the 'Seven Psychopaths'!
It's kinda like 'The Seven
Samurai'.

(MORE)

BILLY (cont'd)
Except they're psychopaths. And
there's only one! Hey, I've got a
psychopath for ya!

MARTY sighs, orders more beers.

BILLY

Did you see that thing in the paper
the other day? Those two Mafia guys
who got whacked? How about this?
There's this serial killer goin'
round, a major fucking whacko,
however he ain't like your usual
serial-killer, "Tie up a freckle-
headed hitch-hiker on a highway",
no, this guy, he's got a little bit
more integrity. He's got a little
bit more class. This serial killer
will only kill mid to high-ranking
members of the Italian-American
organised crime syndicate.

(pause)

Or the Yakuza.

MARTY

That's a great fucking psychopath,
Billy.

BILLY

Do ya think?!

MARTY

Is that your idea? Can I keep it?

BILLY

Well it's my idea from the thing in
the paper. I don't know if it was
the killer's idea he'd only kill
guys from the Italian-American
organised crime syndicate. It's
probably more, y'know, a feud.

MARTY starts writing on a napkin.

MARTY

'A serial-killer who will only
kill...'

BILLY

'Mid to high-ranking...'

MARTY

'Mid to high-ranking members of the
Italian-American organised crime
syndicate'.

BILLY

'Or the Yakuza'.

MARTY

I'll keep it the Mafia. Saves doin'
Jap dialogue. That's a great
fucking psychopath, Billy. Can I
keep it?

BILLY

You can if you let me help write
your movie with ya!

MARTY looks at BILLY, not managing to hide his true feelings.
BILLY sees it but covers up his hurt.

BILLY

You can keep it, Marty, I'm just
kidding with ya. Oh, the papers are
calling him the 'Jack O' Diamonds
Killer'. He left a Jack of Diamonds
on both bodies.

MARTY writes that down too, thrilled. BILLY a little sad.

INT. KAYA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

KAYA on bed, watching TV. MARTY at desk, pours a white wine.
A newspaper article on the Jack of Diamonds Killer, and a
notepad beside him reads 1. THE JACK O' DIAMONDS. 2. THE
BUDDHIST PSYCHOPATH.

MARTY thinks a while, crosses out 'BUDDHIST' writes 'AMISH'.
Drinks. Gets excited. Crosses out 'AMISH', writes 'QUAKER'.
Starts writing furiously. KAYA smiles.

KAYA

Ah honey, I love that you're...

MARTY

(irritated)

Shh, honey, for Christ's sake...!

He puts a hand over his ear as he continues.

KAYA

(to herself, sadly)

A writer...

She sighs at the ceiling. He writes the word 'VOICEOVER'...

MARTY (V.O.)

The daughter of a Quaker went
missing and when she was discovered
the slit in her throat turned out
to be the least of the damage done
to her...

EXT. SUMMER MEADOW 1950 - DAY

From the back a black-suited MAN IN HAT bends over his DAUGHTER's bloody body, wraps her white dress around her and carries her into church, leaving a trail of blood across the summer grass, blue skies above.

EXT. BLOODY ROOM 1950 - DAY

The KILLER (male, 18) cross-legged in a chair, rocking slightly, hands bloody.

MARTY (V.O.)

Her killer, whose name shall not be noted, could not bear the guilt and the horror...

EXT. POLICE STATION 1950 - DAY

From behind, the KILLER walks past cops into the station.

MARTY (V.O.)

...and a year to the day of her death he walked into a police station, gave himself up.

EXT. COURTROOM 1950 - DAY

KILLER sitting quietly as the JUDGE passes sentence and the SPECTATORS go crazy, baying for blood; all except the black-suited MAN IN HAT who sits silently at the back of the court.

MARTY (V.O.)

And though he asked for execution, the Judge gave him life, and the killer was sent off to Sing-Sing to serve out his sentence.

The KILLER turns to look at the MAN IN HAT. The MAN looks out of the window beside him at the blue skies there. The KILLER faces front, bows his head.

MARTY (V.O.)

Twenty-seven years went by...

INT. CELL - DAY

KILLER in cell, 27 years later, all manner of religious iconography over the walls of his section of cell. His CELLMATE watches him reading his bible.

MARTY (V.O.)

The killer found religion...

CELLMATE spits in his face. KILLER wipes it off, smiles tenderly at CELLMATE who, irritated turns away.

MARTY (V.O.)

...And was sincere about it, he had changed, and if he had ever been a psychopath, he was not one any more.

EXT. PRISON YARD - DAY

KILLER picks up a pretty flower as he sweeps near the prison entrance. He examines the flower gently.

MARTY (V.O.)

This story isn't about him.

A CATHOLIC PRIEST the KILLER knows, enters the prison and waves to the KILLER. As the KILLER smiles and waves back he catches a glimpse, outside the prison gates, of a MAN IN HAT, standing there, far-off, waiting. The gates close on him.

INT. CELL - NIGHT

KILLER lies awake, rosary in hand, fingering the crucifix.

MARTY (V.O.)

Even more years went by...

INT. CELL - DAY

KILLER and CELLMATE kneeling, praying together.

MARTY (V.O.)

And the authorities finally realised that it wasn't a scam, that he did really mean it, that he had truly repented...

PRIEST and GOVERNOR enter cell, smiling...

MARTY (V.O.)

And they decided to set him free.

CELLMATE shakes KILLER's hand. KILLER's smile is tempered by a tinge of worry, fear.

EXT. PRISON - NIGHT

KILLER steps out thru gates with a small bag and a bible. Worried, he looks around. There is no-one there. He walks away, then seems to hear footsteps following. He stops, looks around. Doesn't seem to see anyone. Freaked, he hails a cab and it drives him away. Autumn leaves swirl after it.

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

KILLER hangs a few crucifixes, blessings, other Christian paraphernalia around the walls of his bare room.

MARTY (V.O.)

And he found himself a place to stay.

KILLER sits cross-legged on a chair, reminiscent of the way he sat 30 years earlier.

MARTY (V.O.)

And he determined to live a simple, joyous life in the years now left to him.

Asleep in bed, crucifix in hand, a dark shadow flits across his face. The KILLER wakes, startled, looks around the room. There is no-one there. The curtains flap in the half-open window - it was probably just this, he reasons, relieved.

Suddenly the sound of footsteps running downstairs is heard. The KILLER jumps up, opens his door and looks downstairs. There is no-one there, but the door is swinging open. He runs down, looks out. The foggy, lamp-lit street is empty.

Back in his room, the KILLER sits cross-legged on his chair, fear written across his face. He cranes his neck to look out his window. In amongst the swirling fog, at a lamp at the far end of the street, the MAN IN HAT stands, looking up.

MARTY (V.O.)

A simple, joyous life was not what was left to him.

I/E STREETS - DAY/NIGHT

Down both crowded and empty streets, by day and by night, the weary KILLER walks, always on edge, always looking behind him for the MAN IN HAT who is sometimes there, sometimes not. Sometimes at baseball games. Sometimes at church fairs.

At times, half mad now, the KILLER tries to catch him, or at least get a proper look at him, but always fails. As all this goes on, the KILLER gets older and older and older...

MARTY (V.O.)

This went on for twenty fucking years, til finally the killer went mad...

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

The KILLER, twenty years older, cross-legged on chair, every inch of the walls behind him covered in Christian clutter. He cranes his neck, looks out window, and sees the MAN IN HAT at a distant streetlamp, the road strewn with winter snow.

MARTY (V.O.)

And one winter night while recalling a Catholic tract he'd read which stated that the only people guaranteed a place in Hell... the only people guaranteed a place in Hell, were not murderers, were not rapists, but were those who had died by their own hand...

The KILLER opens a cut-throat razor...

MARTY (V.O.)

...the Killer accepted such an idea as beautiful and he welcomed it, for he knew that at least in Hell the Quaker would not be there.

The KILLER holds up the razor to his throat. The MAN IN HAT almost imperceptibly shakes his head 'No'. The KILLER slowly nods 'Yes', and deeply slices his throat from ear to ear.

MARTY (V.O.)

So he cut his own throat open, and as the blood poured out of him he looked out his window and with his final breath he whispered "Now are you happy, old man? Now are you happy?" And the last thing the killer ever saw...

The MAN IN HAT smiles almost imperceptibly as he takes out his own cut-throat razor...

MARTY (V.O.)

...was the old man take out a cut-throat razor of his own...

The MAN IN HAT puts the razor to his throat...

MARTY (V.O.)

...put it to his throat...

The MAN IN HAT slowly cuts his own throat, blood slowly oozing out...

MARTY (V.O.)

...and slice.

As the MAN IN HAT looks up at the window, the blood pouring out of him, the TITLE CARD - PSYCHOPATH NO.2 appears. FADE TO BLACK as he bleeds.

INT. KAYA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

MARTY, in a chair beside the bed, puts the notepad aside and watches KAYA sleeping. He finishes the last of the bottle of wine, still watching her.

An unopened bottle stands beside him. He picks it up, looks at it, looks at the beautiful KAYA, battling with himself whether to open it or go to bed.

KAYA, still asleep, rolls onto her other side, away from him. MARTY opens the new bottle quietly, guiltily, and pours himself a large glass.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

A double funeral for TOMMY and LARRY. Their MOTHERS crying; many dark-suited HENCHMEN in attendance, including PAULO, DENNIS and AL. Their boss, CHARLIE COSTELLO, stern-faced beside his beautiful girlfriend MARI, who's crying quietly.

MARI

It's so unfair. They were right outside my place, Charlie. It could as easily've been me.

CHARLIE

Mm.

MARI

Oughtn't you go say something to their moms?

CHARLIE winces.

MARI

(nudging him)

Go on, Charlie, go. Then we can go home...

CHARLIE

Mari, don't push me, okay?

MARI

I wasn't pushing you, Charlie, I was nudging you...

CHARLIE

Well how is that any different?
"Nudging me." Fucking idiot.

CHARLIE goes over to the MOTHERS.

TOMMY'S MOTHER

Oh Charlie, why? Why our sons? Why?

10

CHARLIE

Yes, I don't know why, but I want you both to know that when we get whoever did this, we're gonna crucify the motherfucker.

PRIEST

Mister Costello, please...

TOMMY'S MOTHER

Killed, yes! I want this man killed!

CHARLIE

Yes. That's what I said. I said we were gonna crucify him. That would involve him being killed.

TOMMY'S MOTHER

Killed I want him.

CHARLIE

Yes. I just said that.

PAULO approaches, perturbed, as CHARLIE hugs the MOTHERS.

PAULO

Charlie? It's your dog, Charlie.
It's Bonny.

CHARLIE quickly extricates himself from the MOTHERS, their grief forgotten.

CHARLIE

What about him?! What's wrong with him?!

PAULO

He's gotten lost somehow. Sharice was walking him...

CHARLIE

He's what?! No, you're wrong, you piece of shit. Tell me you're wrong and you're fucking with me...

PRIEST strides over, gets in CHARLIE's face...

PRIEST

Would you keep your goddam voice down?! There are people grieving here!!

CHARLIE

Fuck you, you potatohead Mick fuck!
(crying)
My dog's lost!

CHARLIE grabs the PRIEST's face, shoves him backwards into one of the graves and strides away with his HENCHMEN. TITLE - PSYCHOPATH NO.3. - as he walks away, MARI dumbstruck.

INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

BILLY dressing for the party, checks himself in the mirror, a little sadly, unhappy with his looks.

BILLY

You're gonna have a nice time tonight, Billy, relax. He's your best friend, ain't he? And Kaya ain't so bad. It ain't her fault she's a bitch. Be nicer to her. It must be hard being an Asian-American in this country. Or whatever it is she is. Try not to be so judgmental. Try not to be so judgemental about Asians, and blacks, and fags. You are, you know that? You're judgemental. They can be human beings too, a lot of the time.

He pulls on his jacket, grabs the bottle of wine for the party, and gently strokes the three-legged shitsu that's lying on his couch, chewing a little toy.

BILLY

Hey Bonny. We'll get you back to your Daddy in a day or two. Don't be sad.

Bonny gives a happy bark.

BILLY

You're not sad! You're happy! Good!

INT. KAYA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Party in full swing, MARTY pretty drunk already, but happy, gives BILLY a hug of welcome, KAYA irritated in background.

MARTY

Girlfriend couldn't make it, huh?

BILLY just smiles. MARTY does some weird dancing.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

HANS and MYRA.

MYRA

You should go, Mr Kieslowski.

18
HANS

It's Friday night in Hollywood, Mrs
Kieslowski. Where else would I
wanna be but the cancer ward with
my baby?

He kisses her at length.

MYRA

I hope I ain't dying too soon. I
want plenty more kisses.

HANS

You ain't dying, baby.

MYRA

You think I'm gonna see Wendy
again, when I do?

HANS

We'll both see her again, Myra. But
not anytime too soon.

MYRA

You ever worry we was wrong all
these years, and there ain't no
Heaven, and there ain't no nothing?

HANS

Of course I worry.

MYRA

You do?

HANS

God loves us. I know He does. He's
just got a funny way o' showing it
sometimes.

MYRA

Sometimes I think God's crazy
sometimes, stuff he lets happen.
Like he's gone psycho or something.

HANS

Well, He's had a lot to contend
with in his time too. Bastards
killed his kid too.

MYRA

Don't say bastards, honey.

HANS

It's just a word, Myra.

MYRA

(pause)

I hope Wendy'll still recognise me.
Me half the woman I was.

HANS holds her hand, tears in his eyes, nothing he can say.

INT. KAYA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Party ongoing. MARTY, good and drunk, relating the 'Quaker Psychopath' story to BILLY, KAYA and a couple of her FRIENDS.

MARTY

And the last thing the Killer ever saw... was the Quaker take out a cut-throat razor,.. put it to his own throat... and slice.

Approbation from KAYA et al, but BILLY is perturbed by it.

MARTY

It's ah, it's a psychopath as Gandhiesque hero. It's what American movies need right now, oh yeah. What's up, Billy? Don't you get it?

BILLY

I get it.

MARTY

You don't look like you get it. Maybe it ain't clear enough. Maybe I shoulda had you write it with me.

BILLY

Maybe, Marty, you just drink too much.

MARTY

What did you just say? Billy, you're a dog-kidnapper! I'm taking advice on drinking from a fucking dog-kidnapper, everybody!

BILLY

I ain't no dog-kidnapper, Marty. I'm an actor. That dog-kidnapping is a part-time thing for a friend I'd rather not discuss right now...

MARTY

Tell everybody who you think your father is.

KAYA

Stop it, Martin.

MARTY

Billy thinks his father is Travis Bickle from 'Taxi Driver'.

BILLY

I don't think that...

MARTY

He doesn't think his father is Robert DeNiro, the actor, which, although unlikely, is within the realms of possibility. Billy thinks his father is a character Robert DeNiro played in a movie. This is the extent of the psychosis with which we're dealing.

BILLY

I think maybe you need to get on a twelve step program, Marty. Then retrace all your steps.

MARTY

I think maybe you need to get the fuck out of my party.

KAYA

It's my party.

MARTY

And you'll cry if you want to.

MARTY goes off for another drink.

KAYA

I'm sorry, Billy. Maybe you'd better go.

BILLY

Yeah. Hey Kaya? That quaker story he just told us? I told that story to Marty in a bar about two months ago. A good friend of mine told it to me. So, y'know, there might be copyright issues at the very least.

KAYA can see BILLY's telling the truth. They look at MARTY.

MARTY

What are yous looking at?

MARTY'S POV - of BILLY and KAYA as he takes a drink, glass entering frame. Slow FADE TO BLACK as he does so.

INT. VEGAS HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

A VIETNAMESE man dressed as a Catholic PRIEST, sitting on the edge of the bed, quietly staring into space, a neon sign flashes outside his window thru the blinds. After a while he reaches inside his jacket, takes out a snub-nosed .44, checks it's loaded, puts it back and stares into space again.

The toilet flushes. The VIETNAMESE PRIEST remains staring into space. From the bathroom a beautiful brunette HOOKER emerges, chewing gum, dressed only in red panties.

HOOKER

Whatcha doin', honey? Ain't ya getting undressed?

VIETNAMESE PRIEST

(in Vietnamese, subtitled)

If I could massacre every one of you, every man, woman and child in this Godforsaken country who helped tear apart mine, I would. I must focus, however, on the gruesome task I have in hand, and this is what I shall do now. This is what I shall do.

HOOKER

Whatcha talking, honey? Chinese?

VIETNAMESE PRIEST

(in English)

Vietnamese. Vietnamese.

HOOKER

Oh, Vietnamese. Didn't we have some big war with you guys one time?

VIETNAMESE PRIEST

(in Vietnamese, subtitled)

Yes.

(pause)

It isn't over.

He reaches inside his jacket for the .44.

TITLE CARD - PSYCHOPATH NO. 4. FADE TO BLACK.

BLACK SCREEN

A screaming ansaphone message is heard.

ANSAPHONE MAN 1

Hey Billy?! Is this Billy?! I'm gonna eat your heart off a plastic tray, Billy, you fuck! You understand me?!

(MORE)

ANSAPHONE MAN 1 (cont'd)

This is your mother calling! This is your mother! You ain't got no fucking movie premiere! I'm gonna come over there and assassinate your bony ass!

Message clicks off as...

INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - DAY

MARTY'S POV - FADE UP as he awakes, bleary-eyed, to Bonny the dog licking his face. END POV.

MARTY on couch, doesn't know quite where he is or how he got there. BILLY comes out of the kitchen, chewing toast.

BILLY

Toast?

MARTY

What am I doing at your place, Billy?

BILLY

Kaya threw you out.

MARTY

What did Kaya throw me out for?

BILLY

You called her a fucking bitch in front of all her friends.

MARTY

I would never do that! No matter how drunk I got! Not to her face!

BILLY

Well phone her up and see.

MARTY

Hah?

BILLY

Well phone her up and see.

MARTY

Phone her up and see did I call her a fucking bitch in front of all her friends to her face?

BILLY

Yeah.

MARTY

Well I will.

BILLY

Well do.

MARTY gets BILLY's phone, tentatively dials a number.

KAYA'S VOICE

Hello?

BILLY

Hi Kaya? It's me...

Phone is hung up, drones. MARTY starts getting worried, tries to piece the evening together. He notices scrawled on his palm the words 'DEAD RELATIONSHIP DEBRIS'. He winces.

BILLY

(chuckling)

Is she still mad? Is she still mad you called her a fucking bitch in front of all her friends?

MARTY redials. KAYA answers.

MARTY

Honey, listen, I can't remember exactly what happened last...

KAYA'S VOICE

The words "My girlfriend's a fucking bitch" mean anything to you?

MARTY winces again.

KAYA'S VOICE

(crying)

And repeated over and over, "My girlfriend's a fucking bitch". That don't mean anything to you?

KAYA hangs up again, phone drones.

MARTY

I guess I called my girlfriend a fucking bitch in front of all her friends.

BILLY

These things happen, Marty. Toast?

MARTY

(shakes head)

You get a new dog?

INT. TORTURE ROOM - DAY

A plump girl, SHARICE sits chained to a chair, questioned by CHARLIE and his HENCHMEN, PAULO, DENNIS and AL.

CHARLIE

Where were you walking him,
Sharice?

SHARICE

Lafayette Park, Mr Costello, please
don't hurt me. I didn't mean to
lose Bonny. I just looked around
and he was gone.

CHARLIE

Like Abraham, Martin and John, huh?

SHARICE

Like a dog what run off.

CHARLIE

If it was a genuine error, Sharice,
if it wasn't your fault and he just
run off, why did you run off have
us piss away twelve hours just to
find your fat ass?

SHARICE

Well, I thought, you love your dog
so much, Mr Costello, and you're
such a angry type of person, I
thought you wouldn't listen to
anything I had to say about losing
Bonny, you'd think it was all my
fault and drag me back and tie me
up and kill me.

CHARLIE

Well, yeah, that was a pretty good,
yeah...

CHARLIE takes out his gun, puts it to her head and fires...
but it jams badly. As the terrified SHARICE looks on, he
gives the gun to AL to unjam it.

AL

You should get a new one, boss.

CHARLIE

I know, but I like the handle, the
blue. I'm sorry about this,
Sharice. What it is, I don't oil
it.

SHARICE

Please, Mr Costello, I always took real good care of Bonny...

CHARLIE

C'mon, Sharice, my gun's stuck, don't take advantage.

AL gives CHARLIE his fixed gun back.

DENNIS

That Lafayette Park, there's been a buncha dog-kidnappings down there, I heard.

CHARLIE looks at SHARICE, then at DENNIS.

DENNIS

Yeah, this Norwegian chick I was banging, she got her dog back had been missing a coupla days. Gave the guy a big reward, but then she started thinking about it, there was something a little fishy about it; there was something a little fishy about the whole thing. She asked around. Same thing had happened to three other people around there.

CHARLIE

And, I'm sorry Dennis, when were you going to mention this?

DENNIS

Don't get mad at me, Charlie, I'd've mentioned it the first time I was fucking asked if I hadn't been looking for fat-ass all night!

CHARLIE

Dennis? Al? Could you go make enquiries, get my fucking dog back for me?

DENNIS

Sure, boss. What about fatso?

CHARLIE looks at SHARICE a while, then shrugs.

CHARLIE

She still lost my fucking dog, man.

CHARLIE raises his gun and fires. A deafening shot is heard. Then, thru the gunsmoke, it's revealed he's just shot at the wall behind her.

CHARLIE

I'm kidding, Sharice. You can go.

INT. DOG WAREHOUSE - DAY

MARTY nursing his hangover, BILLY feeding the yapping dogs.

BILLY

Do you remember telling everybody I think my daddy is Travis Bickle?

MARTY puts his head in his hands.

BILLY

Not only is that not what I actually believe, I told you that in confidence, Marty.

MARTY

I think I might stop drinking for a while. It'll be good. I'll get some work on the 'Psychopaths' done.

BILLY

Shoot, did I leave any water in Bonny's bowl. I don't think I left any water in Bonny's bowl. I'll be back in a minute.

(goes to door)

Oh, Marty? Err, there's something I think you might be mad at me, but I think in the long run, when you've had a chance to think about it, you're, ah, you're gonna thank me for. It's in the LA Weekly, there, in the classifieds, there.

BILLY goes out. MARTY hurriedly flips to the classifieds.

MARTY

Aw fuck, Billy...!!

The Ad reads...

"CALLING ALL PSYCHOPATHS! Are you MENTAL or DERANGED? Maybe you have recently been hospitalised but are now 'OKAY'? Or perhaps the world just 'DOESN'T UNDERSTAND YOU'? I am writing a screenplay with my friend called 'THE SEVEN PSYCHOPATHS', and if your story is crazy or quirky enough, we may use it for our movie! Yes! Payment is minimal, we are poor, but you will definitely be invited to the world's premiere at Mann's Chinese Theatre, Los Angeles. Please telephone BILLY BICKLE on 310 255 7180."

MARTY, to put it mildly, is aghast.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Hans carrying a dog thru a poor neighbourhood, checks its nametag against the clapboard house he's outside. Knocks on door. A HISPANIC GUY answers, thrilled at the sight of the dog, who yelps happily as HANS hands it over.

The HISPANIC GUY's children come up, delighted, crying. The GUY passes the dog to them, tells HANS to wait, goes inside. HANS watches the children with the dog, sickened at himself.

The GUY returns with ten dollars, which he offers to HANS. Even more disgusted at himself, HANS refuses and walks away with his sad thoughts, happy family framed in the doorway.

INT. CAR - DAY

As HANS walks away from the house, DENNIS and AL, following in their car, screech up beside him. DENNIS jumps out, puts a gun to HANS' back and bundles him in the car. Car pulls off.

DENNIS

Where do you keep the dogs, old man?

HANS

What dogs?

DENNIS severely clubs HANS across the head with the gun.

DENNIS

Second time. Where do you keep the dogs, old man?

HANS

228 Lincoln.

Car turns in that direction. DENNIS indicates HANS' cravat.

DENNIS

What the Hell's that?

HANS

A cravat.

DENNIS

A what?

HANS

A cravat.

DENNIS

(to AL)

You heard of a cravat?

AL looks at the cravat. Nods.

AL

Like a neckerchief.

AL turns back to his driving. They continue on in silence.

INT. DOG WAREHOUSE - DAY

MARTY still looking at Billy's ad, sitting in a daze.

MARTY

Billy gave out his own telephone number.

(pause)

Billy gave out all about a movie I ain't finished in the LA Weekly. How much more fucked up can my life get today?

The warehouse door bursts open. HANS is pushed in at gunpoint by DENNIS and AL. MARTY is aghast again. The dogs go mad.

DENNIS

Who're you?

MARTY

I'm Billy's friend!

DENNIS

Well you just keep out of our way, Billy's friend. Al, check the cages.

Al quickly does so, Uzi in hand, to no avail.

AL

She ain't here.

DENNIS

Where is she, old man? A grey Shitsu with a limpy little leg, name of Bonny?

MARTY remembers the dog, terrified.

HANS

A grey Shitsu? We ain't never had a Shitsu in here..

Suddenly DENNIS and AL rake the dogs with sustained gunfire, tearing them all to bloody dog-pieces, MARTY terrified, HANS sickened but stoic. DENNIS puts his gun to HANS' head.

DENNIS

You don't listen good the first time, do ya old man? Where's Bonny?

MARTY

I know where she is!

AL brings MARTY over, puts a gun to his head too.

DENNIS

Where?

MARTY

She's...

HANS

Kid? I don't know who you are or why you're here, and I don't know if you do know where this dog is or if you don't know where this dog is but, either way, have some pride in yourself, have some faith in Jesus as your Lord, and don't tell these dog-killing motherfuckers nothing.

DENNIS cocks his gun at HANS' head. HANS doesn't even flinch.

MARTY

No! I'll tell ya! I'll tell ya!

Framed in the doorway behind DENNIS and AL, the FIGURE in the ski-mask from PAGE 1 enters, walks up behind them and blows both their fucking heads off.

The FIGURE drops a Jack of Diamonds onto each of their bodies, civilly bows to HANS and MARTY, turns, and walks out.

MARTY, covered in blood and brains, falls to the floor in a heap and pukes. HANS looks over his poor dead dogs, hideous in their bloody cages.

HANS

Probably we better get out of here.

INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Bonny lapping water. BILLY playing his messages.

ANSAPHONE MAN 2

Hello? Uh, yeah, I'm a fucking psychopath, man! I'm goddam crazy! I take drugs, man. I talk to the devil. I could freak you out the kinda stories I got to tell you, man. So you call me. My cellphone is 646 862 2224, or you can get me at my mom's house, that's 310 636...

BILLY deletes. Machine reads '36 MESSAGES REMAINING'. Plays the next, wild guitar noises, then...

ANSAPHONE MAN 3

Horrrrrgghh! Billlyyyy! Sssss!!!

BILLY deletes. A sudden banging at the door. BILLY opens it. The bloody MARTY staggers onto the couch, HANS following.

BILLY

Oh my God! What happened?!

HANS

Some guys killed all our dogs, then some other guy killed those guys.

BILLY

I've only been gone two minutes! Are you okay, Marty?

HANS

He's okay. That's their blood. It's his sick.

BILLY

You wanna go to the bathroom, Marty? Clean some of the blood and the sick off ya?

MARTY

Yeah, I'll go to the bathroom...

In a daze, MARTY does so.

BILLY

That's my writer friend I was telling you about.

HANS

Mm, I could smell the booze.

(sits)

They shot 'em all, Billy. Every last one of them. Said they were looking for a...

HANS sees Bonny, lifts its floppy leg.

HANS

....grey Shitsu with a limpy little leg. Where'd you get this grey Shitsu, Billy?

BILLY

Got her night before last offa some dopey fat girl down Lafayette.

HANS

Weren't you gonna bring her in?

BILLY

I was, Hans, then goldarnit I started growing kinda fond of her and her spazzy little leg there. Why, you think she's the one they're after?

HANS reads Bonny's tag. We see that beneath a phone number are engraved the words...

HANS

'My name is Bonny. If found, please return to Charles Costello, or you will be killed.' I think there's a possibility she's the one they're after.

MARTY comes out, cleaned up a little. HANS places the JACK OF DIAMONDS card he's picked up on the table. BILLY looks at it in astonishment.

BILLY

Marty?! It's your psychopath, Marty! It's the Jack o' Diamonds!

MARTY

Can we all go to a nice bar and get a drink now, please?

INT. DOG WAREHOUSE - DAY

CU on the other Jack of Diamonds, on DENNIS' body. It moves slightly, as DENNIS does. He's still alive, though barely. He manages to press a number on his cellphone.

LATER. CHARLIE waiting anxiously as PAULO checks the dead dogs. PAULO signals no, none are Bonny. CHARLIE sighs with relief. DENNIS is still gurgling on the ground.

CHARLIE

Okay. Get this guy to a hospital, get this guy disposed of, get this room so it looks like nothing ever happened and let's find the fuckers who've got my Bonny.

CHARLIE storms out.

PAULO

And have been killing off half your men...

INT. NIGHT CAR - DAY

HANS, MARTY and BILLY driving past the warehouse. Another HENCHMAN is guarding outside as CHARLIE comes out. BILLY pushes Bonny's head down out of sight.

MARTY

He looks like a fucking psychopath.

BILLY nods, happy about the fact.

EXT. HANS' HOUSE - DAY

CU - Name on doorbell - HANS and MYRA KIESLOWSKI. END CU.

From CHARLIE's limo parked across the street we see the HENCHMEN ransacking HANS' house, then PAULO leaving it and approaches.

PAULO

No Bonny, boss. But I did find this. His wife's in the County Hospital. Couldn't find a photo.

PAULO hands CHARLIE a hospital letter. CHARLIE scans it, nods. The HENCHMEN set the house alight. They drive off.

EXT. BAR - DAY

Outside a bar/restaurant at Venice Beach sit MARTY, BILLY and HANS. MARTY finishes a beer and orders another, to BILLY's disdain. HANS' thoughts are elsewhere. BILLY has Bonny in his lap and the Jack of Diamonds card in his hand.

MARTY

Are we gonna give him his dog back?

BILLY

That guy's forfeited all right of ever having a nice dog like this.

MARTY

Are we gonna go to the police?

BILLY

Fuck that shit.

MARTY

Well what are we gonna do?

BILLY

I think we should try and find this Jack O' Diamonds guy and get him to join forces with us, and we could take on all the bad guys, like, maybe in a desert or somewhere.

MARTY

Uh-huh? And what do you think we should do in real life?

BILLY

Well, we could sober up, Marty, how about that?

MARTY

Fuck you. I almost got killed today.

BILLY

Yeah, but you didn't, Marty. You never look on the bright side.

HANS

I'm gonna head to the hospital. I wanna be with Myra when her results come in.

BILLY

Give her my love, will ya, Hans?

HANS nods, leaves.

MARTY

Who's Myra?

BILLY

His wife. She just had surgery for cancer. And you think you've got problems!

MARTY glares at him, finishes another beer.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE BILLY'S APARTMENT - DAY

MARTY and BILLY walking from car to the apartment.

BILLY

Y'know what, Marty, the way you're feeling today, all depressed and shit, and all this stuff that's happened, all this drama, you know what you should do? Put it in your writing, man. Use it. Mad idea?

MARTY

Thanks, Billy. I'll do that. I'll put the way I'm feeling into my writing. Then I'll go blow my fucking brains out.

BILLY

(laughs)

Come on, Marty, you know your writing helps alleviate your suicidal self-loathing and shit.

MARTY

I don't have suicidal self-loathing
and shit.

BILLY

Yeah, right! Hey, who's this chump?

They stop, warily, as they see a very old guy waiting on
BILLY's stoop, a white rabbit in his arms. They walk by as if
they're just passing. He smiles at them. They come back.

BILLY

You waiting for somebody, old guy?

ZACHARIAH

Are you Billy Bickle?

BILLY

Nuh, er, no.

ZACHARIAH

My name is Zachariah Rigby. I left
a message on Billy's telephone in
answer to his advertisement.

MARTY sighs.

BILLY

Well, I'll tell you this,
Zachariah, if you sounded like a
nut I probably just deleted you.

ZACHARIAH

I don't think I sounded like a nut.

BILLY

Were you screaming about the devil
and eating my heart off a tray?

ZACHARIAH

No! Gosh!

BILLY

Okay, you seem normal. Come on
upstairs. I've got to get this dog
off the street cos it's kidnapped.

ZACHARIAH follows BILLY upstairs. MARTY cannot BELIEVE the
INSANITY of today, but can do nothing else but follow.

INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - DAY

ZACHARIAH on couch, intrigued smile, as BILLY connects his
brand new tape machine to ZACH's lapel.

MARTY

I got a distinct... I got a distinct memory of seeing that tape machine before. I just can't remember where, and I can't remember when.

BILLY

I guess it ain't all that distinct then. Zachariah? Unfortunately I gotta run out and see my girlfriend now, but it's Marty my writing partner who'll be doing most of the writing on the movie anyway, so if you just tell him your story in your own time...

MARTY

What?! You ain't leaving me with him, Billy. You ain't got a girlfriend! He ain't got a girlfriend!

BILLY

Like I'd say I have a girlfriend when I don't have a girlfriend! That'd be insane! So you're all set, Zach. It's voice-activated so just start telling your crazy stuff and, Marty, take good care of Bonny and you guys have fun and I'll see you very soon.

BILLY hurries out, leaving MARTY and ZACH, Bonny and the rabbit to sit there looking at each other a while.

MARTY

Zachariah? I gotta tell ya, I don't really... This isn't really... Billy, he gets these funny ideas, y'know? Being a writer isn't really... You don't really...

(pause)

Listen, why don't you start telling the tape whatever you want to tell it and I'll make us a coffee and we'll see how we go, huh?

ZACHARIAH

Well that'd be swell! And when I tell you my story and you use it in your movie, well, instead of any monetary reward, there's one little favor I gotta ask of ya. Would that be okay?

MARTY

Why don't you go just tell me your story, Zach, and we'll work that stuff out later?

MARTY goes thru to the kitchen, flips the kettle on, and puts his head in his hands, as he listens to...

ZACHARIAH (O.S.)

Dandy! Well, I guess it all began back when I was 21 years old! Ah, the distant mists of time! Heh. Well, I'll tell ya, I was kinda wet behind the ears back then, I don't mind admitting, and I was burglarising the house of a judge out there in Delacroix, Hanging Judge Parsons, I found out later his name was, and let me tell ya, don't never burglarise the house of no hanging Judge, cos when I was burglarising his house I went down to his basement there and guess what I come across? I come across the corpses of two negro girls chained up there, and the half-dead body of another negro girl chained right along with 'em.

The stunned MARTY comes back with the coffees and starts listening to ZACH with the attention he deserves.

ZACHARIAH

Thank you kindly. Well, the girl's name was Maggie, and boy did we get the hell out of that place quick, and Maggie told me all about this Judge who'd drug her there from the colored orphan asylum she grew up in, and the terrible things he'd do to her, and I got to thinking 'Golly, this ain't right, us running off and letting that ole Judge go and do the same thing to some other poor girls, so y'know what we did?

MARTY

You went to the police?

ZACHARIAH

No, no. We drove on back there and we got that hanging Judge and we hung him by his neck til he was dead and made it look like a suicide and that's when Maggie and me got the idea, see?

MARTY

What idea?

ZACHARIAH

We got the idea to go around the country killing people who go around the country killing people. 'Serial Killer Killing' I guess nowadays it'd be called.

MARTY

Um, can I just check this is on...?

ZACH smiles as MARTY checks the tape machine is working. It is. MARTY sits, nods for ZACH to go on, and starts taking some serious notes.

EXT. RURAL ROAD BESIDE PHONEBOOTH 1940'S - NIGHT

ZACHARIAH (mid 30's) in a car, gun in hand, waiting for MAGGIE (30's) to finish on the phone. Texas plains stretching to the horizon as dusk falls.

INT. PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

MAGGIE listening on phone as ZACHARIAH waits. She writes down 'LOVERS LANE - TEXARKANA MOONLIGHT MURDERER'. She hangs up. Goes to car. Checks the canoe strapped to its roof with odd metal tubes, then gets in the car. They kiss, drive off.

EXT. LOVERS LANE - NIGHT

A creepy wooded lane by moonlight, the car parked, ZACHARIAH and MAGGIE inside.

STRANGER'S POV - thru the trees, slowly approaching the car.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

ZACHARIAH and MAGGIE smooching. Suddenly a hooded STRANGER sits up in the back-seat, puts a gun to ZACH's head and gestures to drive into the woods, ZACH does so.

Gun still to ZACH's head, the STRANGER touches MAGGIE's right breast as she's backed against the door. Slowly she takes his hand and puts it on her left breast too, smiling. The confused STRANGER looks at ZACH. ZACH shrugs.

MAGGIE indicates to the STRANGER the string hanging from the roof above him. He can't work out what it's for. She pulls it. Suddenly a flap in the roof over the back-seat falls, releasing a cascade of liquid that covers the STRANGER and which, as his hood starts smoking and his body starts melting, we realise is acid.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

The couple stand outside the car, watching the STRANGER thrashing, melting to death. He tries to reach out thru the window - his hand falls off. MAGGIE throws it back in thru the window then tosses a lit match inside. Car bursts into flame, the STRANGER obliterated.

ZACH empties six bullets into him for good measure. MAGGIE places a tick beside 'TEXARKANA MOONLIGHT MURDERER'. The two head off hand in hand like young lovers do, the blood red moon shining above.

INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - DAY

ZACH, present day, reminiscing happily, feeds the rabbit a carrot. MARTY makes frantic notes, checks internet details of the actual cases TEXARKANA MOONLIGHT MURDERER, MAD BUTCHER OF KINGSBURY RUN, all with photos/artists impressions of hooded killers, butchered corpses, many dating back to the 30's.

EXT. KINGSBURY RUN WASTELAND 1930'S - NIGHT

A HOBO looking for food among the junk of the steep-sided wasteland, finds a large, prises the lid off. A human head stares up at him from inside.

Suddenly something falls on him from the bank above - the torso of a headless man. The HOBO lies stock still and watches as up above the massive, silhouetted butcher slowly moves away, sighing.

NEWSPAPER INSERTS - 'SIXTH CORPSE FOUND IN KINGSBURY!' with a photo of it, and of Eliot Ness, under which we read 'AND MISTER NESS APPEARS NO NEARER TO APPREHENDING THE BUTCHER THAN IN 1933 WHEN HIS GHOULISH REIGN OF HORROR FIRST BEGAN.'

EXT. CLEVELAND PHONE BOOTH 1950'S - NIGHT

MAGGIE and ZACHARIAH (aged 40). MAGGIE in booth making notes, ZACHARIAH in a convertible beside it, more weary than he once was. MAGGIE's note reads only 'SANDUSKY LUNATIC ASYLUM'.

INT. LUNATIC ASYLUM DORMITORY - NIGHT

Sounds of sawing. Hysterical screams of ten PATIENTS, all thrashing wildly against the straps that pin them to their beds, as they crane their heads to see, then to look away from, MAGGIE and ZACH as MAGGIE slowly saws through the neck of the BUTCHER (mid 60's), also strapped to his bed.

The BUTCHER is talking to her quietly as his neck is being sawed thru. ZACH turns away, gestures that they should just shoot him. MAGGIE gently puts a finger to his lips for him to shush, kisses him, then gets back to her sawing.

INT. WHITE TILE ROOM - 1960 - DAY

Sounds of hacking and screaming. MAGGIE amongst the dreadful remains of victims of the ACID BATH KILLER; half-heads with nothing below the eyeline; a solitary ear with ear-ring, etc. She's sad for these women, touches them with love.

SLOW PAN to the source of the screams; the ACID BATH KILLER, strapped to a metal chair, having his feet, then his shins, then his knees hacked off by ZACH. MAGGIE enters frame carrying half a head, machete in her other hand.

PAN DOWN past a newspaper on the bloody floor 'FOURTH ABBEYVILLE WOMAN ABDUCTED - NO CLUES' to a note in MAGGIE's writing that reads 'ABBEEVILLE ACID KILLER' a tick beside it. Screams suddenly cease. KILLER's head rolls onto and off the note, blood blotting out everything.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO PHONE BOOTH 1980'S - NIGHT

ZACHARIAH (mid 60's) standing beside his car near the Golden Gate bridge, impatient. MAGGIE in booth on phone, writes down the single word 'ZODIAC' and smiles.

ZACH suddenly bursts into the booth and tries to grab the phone, but she won't let him. He pins her by the neck against the glass, and from the shock on her face it's obvious it's the first time he's ever been violent to her.

ZACH listens to the voice on the phone. His face falls. He mouths the words 'Who is this?' The answer horrifies him. He looks at MAGGIE. She looks away. He hangs up, scared. They get in the car and drive off, ZACH shaken to his core.

EXT. RABBIT LAWN - DAY

An old HIPPIE type in sandals, long white hair, sitting cross-legged on bright green grass in front of his clapboard house, playing with a number of rabbits. They eat from his hand, they sit on his lap, they seem very tame around him.

Car pulls up, MAGGIE gets out, machete in one hand, gun in the other. ZACH gets out reluctantly - this guy seems as innocent as his bunnies. MAGGIE orders the HIPPIE inside his house. HIPPIE complies, scared, a white rabbit in his arms.

INT. HIPPIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Books on Buddhism and rabbit care dotted around, the HIPPIE sits immobile at his table, crying in pain and fear, as MAGGIE screams at him. Both his hands have been pinned to the table with Bowie knives, the rabbit's pretty little nose sniffing at the blood oozing from them.

ZACH is standing to the side squeamishly, as the HIPPIE answers 'No' to all her questions.

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MAGGIE starts pouring gasoline all over him, some splashing the rabbit. ZACH picks it up in his arms, shouting at MAGGIE for being so careless.

The HIPPY nods for ZACH to take the rabbit to safety. ZACH nods, touched. We follow him outside, just as the HIPPY goes up in flames behind him. The rabbit hops happily across the lawn. ZACH cannot bring himself to look back into the fire.

EXT. RABBIT LAWN - NIGHT

A sombre MAGGIE and ZACH on the stoop, the rabbits all around, as the light from the HIPPY still burns in the windows. She goes to hold his hand, and he withdraws it.

She takes off her wedding ring, tosses it away. Walks to the car, puts her gun in her belt, tosses her machete in the back-seat, gives one last sad look at him, and drives away. He watches her go. The white rabbit hops into his arms.

INT. HIPPY'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Fire gone out on the HIPPY's charred skeleton still pinned there, ZACH puts the rabbit on the table, goes upstairs:

INT. HIPPY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

ZACH sitting on the bed, in his hands the moth-eaten but still distinctive hood and costume of the 1970's Zodiac Killer; cryptograms cover the walls, along with maps, photos and newspaper reports detailing his numerous victims.

INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - DAY

MARTY zapping thru the internet. We see the words he sees -

'TEXARKANA MOONLIGHT MURDERER - KILLINGS SUDDENLY CEASED IN 1946...'

'MAD BUTCHER OF KINGSBURY RUN - KILLINGS ENDED IN 1938... NO-ONE EVER ARRESTED...'

'ZODIAC KILLER... MURDERS CEASED IN '75... PRESUMED INCARCERATED, COMMITTED OR DEAD'.

MARTY looks at the frail old man on the couch as ZACH takes the mic from his lapel.

MARTY

Um, if the film gets made, Zach, would you be looking for some kinda credit, or...?

ZACHARIAH

No, I've got plenty of credit. There is one thing I'd like you to do for me, though.

(MORE)

ZACHARIAH (cont'd)

I'd like you to put up a little message at the end of your movie there, and put my telephone number on it, and tell Maggie to call me. And that I love her. And that I've missed her something awful. Would you do that, Martin?

MARTY

I'll do that, Zach.

ZACHARIAH

Do you promise?

MARTY

I promise on my life.

ZACHARIAH

Wow. That's some promise.

They shake and ZACH leaves with his rabbit, waving.

MARTY sits, stunned. Rewinds the tape. His notepad is covered in scrawled notes, dates; As we scan these we listen to parts of the tape...

ZACHARIAH'S VOICE

Maggie kept one of his shins, if I recall...

Rewind to...

ZACHARIAH'S VOICE

In our business, you tend to have to break into quite a lot of asylums if you wanna get your man.

Fast forward to...

ZACHARIAH'S VOICE

Someone said she's working in Juarez now, but I couldn't find her there...

Fast forward to...

MARTY'S VOICE

Who was she making the telephone calls to?

ZACHARIAH'S VOICE

Well... for a long time I believed, cos that was what Maggie told me... I believed that it was Jesus making those calls. Obviously. Cos Jesus don't want no buncha dirty murderers going round killing folks.

(MORE)

ZACHARIAH'S VOICE (cont'd)

But then I got to thinking about it, and to worrying about it, and I grabbed that telephone one time to voice my concerns to Jesus about it, and you know what? It wasn't Jesus at all on that telephone. You know who it was?

MARTY'S VOICE

Who?

ZACHARIAH'S VOICE

It was the goddam Devil on that phone. Yeah. The goddam Devil Incarnate. And I couldn't figure it out for the life of me! Why would the Devil want all those murderers dead? Surely they were doing His business. But no. He wanted 'em croaked. And you know what the really crazy thing about the Devil's voice on that phone was? It was exactly the same as my voice. Yeah. Exactly the same as my voice. I couldn't figure it out. Still can't figure it out.

MARTY clicks the tape off and lets it rewind to the start, stunned by all he's heard. Turns to a fresh page, writes 'PSYCHOPATH NO.5... AND NO.6'. The tape has rewound now, and plays from the start, a conversation from days ago.

MARTY'S VOICE

Oh. How come you haven't been invited to our party Friday night?

BILLY'S VOICE

Yeah.

MARTY'S VOICE

Well, mostly cos... Well, mostly cos my girlfriend's a fucking bitch.

BILLY'S VOICE

Oh-h! I see. I thought maybe she just had issues, or something.

MARTY'S VOICE

No, no. She's a fucking bitch.

BILLY'S VOICE

I see...

MARTY switches the tape off.

MARTY

Motherfucker!

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

MYRA at window, crying a little, looking out at the blue skies, no-one else in the room. Door creaks open...

CHARLIE enters, silenced gun behind his back. He sees MYRA and the two empty beds; one with the name MYRA KIESLOWSKI at the foot of it; one with GEORGIA BROWN.

MYRA

Can I help you?

CHARLIE

Oh no, er, yeah. I was looking for a Polish lady, a Mrs Kieslowski. Do you know where she is?

MYRA

She's having an operation.

CHARLIE tuts, looks at his watch, not caring that he's revealed his silenced gun.

CHARLIE

How long's that gonna take?

MYRA

I don't know.

CHARLIE sits in a chair, puts his gun away.

MYRA

What do you want Mrs Kieslowski for?

CHARLIE

Her husband's got something belongs to me.

MYRA

Oh. Are you gonna shoot her?

CHARLIE

No, no. "Shoot her". No, I'm just gonna scare her, so she tells me where her husband's at, and where my dog's at.

MYRA

What if she don't know?

CHARLIE

Well then I'm gonna get mad.

MYRA sits on GEORGIA's bed.

MYRA

Can I go use the bathroom?

CHARLIE

I think you better wait around here for a while. Do it in a pan or something.

MYRA

I can wait. I don't use no pans.

CHARLIE

Suit yourself.

(pause)

This room smells of death.

(pause)

No offence.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

HANS enters the hospital, a bunch of flowers in hand.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

CHARLIE still waiting, checking his nails. MYRA glances at the door. Dull pause.

MYRA

What's your dog's name?

CHARLIE

Bonny.

MYRA

That's a nice name. I'm sure Mr Kieslowski'll take good care of your dog, get it back to you safe. He always seems like a sweet man when he comes in.

CHARLIE

He come to visit her a lot?

MYRA

(smiles)

Every day.

CHARLIE

Every day, huh? What kinda times every day?

MYRA

(wary)

Oh, different times, you know. And not every day. He misses a day now and then.

CHARLIE

Oh yeah?

CHARLIE looks her over. Looks at the unmade bed beside her.

CHARLIE

He been in today?

MYRA

Yeah, he came by earlier this morning, 'bout ten or so.

CHARLIE

(nods. Smiles)

So the Polack married a nigger, huh?

MYRA pauses, a little scared, then smiles, thinking of HANS.

MYRA

Yeah. The Polack married a nigger.

CHARLIE

Where is he now?

MYRA

I don't know.

CHARLIE

Where's my dog?

MYRA

I don't know.

CHARLIE

Goodbye, Mrs Kieslowski.

MYRA

(turning away, whispered)
Goodbye Hans.

CHARLIE shoots her through the head, killing her instantly.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING-ROOM/CORRIDOR - DAY

HANS, hat on, flowers in hand, walks through the waiting-room and into the corridor, just as, at the far end of it,...

CHARLIE comes out of MYRA's room and into the corridor, joins PAULO, and heads in HANS' direction.

HANS pulls his hat a little lower over his eyes, heart pounding, continuing on. As the two gangsters get closer he begins to catch their conversation...

CHARLIE

The fuck are you talking about,
Paulo? I ain't leaving! I'm gonna
sit here til that dog-thief
motherfucker comes in screaming!

As they're about to pass the two lower their voices.

SLOWMO as they pass - HANS gets a good look at CHARLIE,
CHARLIE gets a good look at HANS. SLOWMO ENDS.

As HANS comes up to the room marked 'MYRA KIESLOWSKI/GEORGIA
BROWN' he decides to continue on past it, just as...

CHARLIE looks around, checks to see if HANS has entered the
room. He watches him continue to the end of the corridor,
then carries on with PAULO, into the waiting-room, just as...

HANS looks back along the corridor, sees it's safe, and
doubles-back to his wife's room.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

HANS holding his dead bloody wife in his arms on the floor.
He isn't crying, he isn't afraid, he isn't angry. He's quiet,
thoughtful, contemplative even. He even smiles once, thinking
of her. He kisses her lips a final goodbye.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - DAY

HANS enters and sees CHARLIE sitting there, flipping thru
Cosmo impatiently as he keeps an eye on the entrance. HANS
sits on a chair across from him, barely four feet away.

CHARLIE nods a slight hello. HANS nods one back. CHARLIE
focuses on the magazine/door again. HANS looks CHARLIE over;
face, hands, clothes; trying to figure what manner of man
this is. CHARLIE senses it, looks back.

CHARLIE

You looking at something?

HANS shakes his head, a slight smile. CHARLIE notices the
couple of patches of blood on HANS' hands.

CHARLIE

You hurt?

HANS

A little.

HANS keeps looking him over. CHARLIE notices his cravat.

CHARLIE

What's that?

HANS

A cravat.

CHARLIE

It's nice. It's very... chic.

HANS

Have it.

HANS undoes his cravat.

CHARLIE

No, really...

HANS

Have it...

HANS pulls it off and offers it out to CHARLIE, and as he does so we see for the first time on HANS' throat the deep deep scar, perhaps ten years old, from where he once slit it, from ear to ear. Disgusted by it, irritated by the offer...

CHARLIE

I don't want your cravat, man..!

...CHARLIE gets up and leaves thru the entranceway.

HANS sits there a while, quietly, ties his cravat back on, covering the scar, and goes over to the RECEPTIONIST. We do not hear his words, but from her face, and by her rushing off to MYRA's room, we understand what's been said.

HANS stands there quietly, looks at the flowers in his hands that he now has no use for, lays them on the desk, and looks at the door CHARLIE passed thru. It slowly swings to a stop.

INT. KAYA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

KAYA pissed, waiting for MARTY to finish.

MARTY

Hear me out, Kaya! One question. At the party when I said you were a fucking bitch,... did I just come out and say it? Just come out and say "Kaya, you're a fucking bitch..."

KAYA

Of course you didn't just come out and say it. It was on the tape that Billy played...

MARTY

I knew it!

7

KAYA

To come out and say it would've
taken guts!

MARTY

Hah?

KAYA

So you're gonna blame all this on
Billy now?

MARTY

Of course I'm gonna blame all this
on Billy now! It's all Billy's
fault!

KAYA

So that isn't your voice on the
tape?

MARTY

Hah?

KAYA

That isn't your voice on the tape?
That isn't your voice on the tape
calling me a fucking bitch? Calling
me a fucking bitch, over and over
and over?

MARTY

Twice, Kaya.

KAYA

Well forgive me if I stopped
listening after the first two
times, Martin!

MARTY

I'll stop drinking, Kaya.

KAYA

Cool, I'll stop breathing. We'll
see who lasts longest. Now please
leave.

MARTY

I almost got killed today!

KAYA

Not my problem.

MARTY

That fucking Billy!

INT. MARI'S HOUSE - DAY

BILLY having sex with someone. We can't see who it is at first, then realise it's MARI, CHARLIE's girlfriend.

MARI

What's wrong, honey?

BILLY

I don't think I can keep it up no more, Mari. I hate these goddam condoms!

MARI

Then take it off, baby, let's do it natural.

BILLY

Natural? But you're still screwing that Mafia guy. God knows what shit that guy's given ya.

MARI

Get the fuck offa me, Billy!

She pushes him off, storms into the next room.

BILLY

What?! I didn't means AIDS or nothing. I meant Gonorrhoea or something. Clamydia.

LIVING-ROOM. Dusk falling. MARI on couch, flipping channels, pissed. BILLY comes out of bedroom, dressed.

MARI

Three weeks I ain't seen you and that's the way you talk to me?

BILLY

I been busy, honey. I been busy helping you out, if you must know.

MARI

What are you talking about?

BILLY

Well, you know you said your whacko boyfriend loves his dog more than anything, right?

MARI puts her hands to her mouth in horror.

MARI

Billy, you've gotta give it back!

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

INVESTIGATORS in MYRA's room collecting evidence, her body covered up.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

HANS being questioned by a DETECTIVE.

DETECTIVE

And you didn't see anybody acting suspiciously when you arrived?

HANS

No.

DETECTIVE

And you don't know of anyone who might've wanted to do this to Mrs Kieslowski?

HANS

No.

DETECTIVE

And you don't know of anyone who might've wanted to set fire to your home?

HANS

No.

DETECTIVE

(sarcastic)

Well thanks for your help, Mr Kieslowski? I think we may be talking to you again later.

DETECTIVE goes back into the room. A DOCTOR comes up to HANS.

DOCTOR

I'm so sorry, Hans.

HANS

Maybe it was a Godsend, Doctor. At least it was quick.

DOCTOR

The cancer was gone, Hans. I'd just given Myra the all-clear.

DOCTOR puts his hand on HANS' shoulder, moves off. Tears well in HANS' eyes. Out a window, night is falling over LA.

INT. MARI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

MARI fraught, BILLY eating Cheet-o's.

BILLY

Give it back? What are you talking about? It's kidnapped. It's a kidnapped dog. You don't just give back a kidnapped dog, it defeats the entire object. They didn't just give Patty Hearst back, did they? No, I'm gonna hold onto it until he starts behaving like a normal decent human being.

MARI

The guy's a psychopath, Billy!

BILLY

That's really no excuse, Mari, and what are you doing screwing a psychopath in the first place? Did you ever ask yourself that?

MARI

What am I doing screwing two psychopaths is the question?!

BILLY

Hah?

INT. INTENSIVE CARE WARD- NIGHT

PAULO leaning over the barely breathing DENNIS, trying to hear what he's saying. CHARLIE getting irritated, a NURSE trying to usher them out.

CHARLIE

What's he...? Tell him to speak up!

NURSE

Sir, if you don't leave now, I'm gonna call the police.

CHARLIE

We are talking to our friend and get some information before he dies. Okay?

PAULO comes away from DENNIS, takes CHARLIE's arm and ushers him out.

PAULO

Nothing.

CHARLIE

Nothing? He had the Polack an hour and he don't remember nothing? Was he fat, was he old...?

3:

PAULO

Nothing. He had some kinda neckerchief on, that's all he remembers.

CHARLIE for the first time knows what the dog-thief looks like. He sighs deeply.

INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

HANS on couch, sad, tired, stroking Bonny, whose head rests on his lap. MARTY comes in, still steamed.

MARTY

Is Billy back yet?

HANS shakes his head.

MARTY

I'm not sure when it started, and I'm not sure why it started, but it does appear that, of late, Billy Bickle has been doing everything in his power to fuck up my entire life. So, what I'm gonna do when he comes home, I'm gonna go kick his stupid fucking teeth in.

HANS

You sound very angry.

MARTY

You wouldn't believe the kinda day I've had.

HANS

Me too. Maybe I better call him, see he's okay.

MARTY

Yeah, why don't you call him, see he's okay, so's then I can go kick his stupid fucking teeth in.

INT. MARI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

MARI goes to the phone, dials.

MARI

I'm gonna call Charlie, clear this entire thing up.

BILLY

No you ain't either...

BILLY's cellphone rings. He answers, as MARI dials a number.

BILLY

Hi Hans. How are ya? Mari...?

MARI

Hi Charlie...

INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

HANS

Fine, Billy. We were a little worried you were late home is all.

INT. MARI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

BILLY

I'm fine. Hey, did Myra get the results back?

INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

HANS

The results came back she got the all-clear.

BILLY'S VOICE

That's great, Hans. I'm so happy for you guys.

HANS

Well... No. That gangster guy whose dog we got, well, he came down and he killed her.

INT. MARI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Life drains from BILLY as he listens to MARI in next room.

BILLY

He what?

HANS' VOICE

I guess he must've found out the connection somehow. He came down and he shot her in the head in the hospital there.

BILLY

(quietly crying)

I'll be with ya in ten minutes, Hans.

BILLY hangs up. Watches MARI on her phone, hearing...

MARI

I know, Charlie, I love you too. I just don't know what's been wrong with me lately...

BILLY puts something in MARI's hand, hangs up her phone. She looks at the thing, confused. BILLY shoots her in the stomach point blank, then goes and sits back down. MARI stares at her bloody midriff in disbelief.

INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

HANS has just hung up. MARTY goes over and sits beside him. MARTY starts crying. HANS pats his knee gently.

HANS

It'll be okay.

INT. MARI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

MARI is on the opposite couch, speechless, blood all over her white dressing gown, looking back and forth from the thing in her hand to BILLY, who dials a number.

BILLY

(on phone)

Could you send an ambulance to 2618 Mountain Drive? A gunshot wound to the stomach. Thank you.

TITLE CARD - PSYCHOPATH NO. 7.

The thing in MARI's hand is revealed to be a Jack of Diamonds... and, so, to the 'PSYCHOPATH NO. 7' TITLE CARD on BILLY are added the words '...AND NO. 1.'

BILLY

(hanging up)

So don't say I never do nothing for ya.

BILLY heads out.

INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

HANS asleep with Bonny. MARTY puts a blanket over them, goes into BILLY's room, looks thru some things on his desk.

INT. CHARLIE'S CAR - NIGHT

CHARLIE and PAULO speeding thru the LA night, BILLY's name and address on a scrap of paper.

INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

MARTY looking thru BILLY's stuff, absent-mindedly holding a deck of cards BILLY had left lying around. He comes across a notebook marked 'BILLY'S DIARY - KEEP OUT'. He hesitates, then turns to the first page, on which is scrawled...

"I AM THE PERSON I ALWAYS WANTED TO BE. I DO NOT WANT TO CUT MY OWN HANDS OFF".

MARTY guiltily starts going thru the diary.

INT. BILLY'S CAR - NIGHT

BILLY speeding homeward, goes thru his glove box; some decks of cards, three handguns with labels attached, the ski-mask from SCENE ONE. He finds a Snickers. Eats it. Yum.

INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

MARTY reading the diary, kinda saddened...

BILLY'S VOICE

Friday 19th. What did you do to help Marty today? Nothing, that's what you did. Some friend you turned out to be...

MARTY flips a few pages...

BILLY'S VOICE

Laugh diary. Made Hans laughs two times today (hedgehog/Arapaho). Full marks to me cos Myra's having her surgery Sunday. Made Marty laugh four times (my trip to the San Diego Zoo). But only half marks cos he was pretty drunk. Note to Billy. Stop being so judgmental about his drinking. So what if he forgets most of what you say to him? Probably it isn't interesting in the first place, did you ever consider that?

Flips a page...

BILLY'S VOICE

Monday 24th. Watched the shadow of the flagpole cross next door's lawn, from ten in the morning til six in the evening. Other people have work to go to. Other people have social lives. Other people do not think about death this much. Or do they? Perhaps they do. I should ask them.

Flips a page...

BILLY'S VOICE

Work out more ways of being a better friend to people. Hans. Do more odd-jobs round the place, maybe take a pay cut. Mari.

(MORE)

BILLY'S VOICE (cont'd)

Make sure she realises she is loved and is a worthwhile person who just got involved with the wrong kind of scum. Kaya. She is the girl Marty loves, so try to get along with her. Deep down she is possibly not a cunt. Listen to her side of the story. Remember she is Asian and hence different to you. Marty. Do everything to keep his mind on track about the 'Seven Psychopaths'. He is probably the best writer of his generation, but he needs to stay focussed. The ad in the LA Weekly is a good idea, go for it. But do not bother him any more about writing the screenplay with him. When he wants your help he will ask for it. If he doesn't want your help, well, that's the way the cookie crumbles, fat boy...

Flips to a page headed 'THE DAY OF RECKONING'. There are bloody fingerprints all over this page but MARTY, and we, don't have time to read further as suddenly the sound of a car screeching up outside is heard. MARTY goes to the window.

Down below, BILLY is at his car, indicating for them to get in quickly. MARTY replaces the diary and cards and hurries out of the room. As the door shuts a couple of the 50 packs of playing cards stacked behind it topple over.

INT. CHARLIE'S CAR - NIGHT

CHARLIE and PAULO screech a couple of corners, stop outside BILLY's apartment and jump out, guns drawn.

INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Apartment empty save for CHARLIE and PAULO; CHARLIE on couch sadly, teary, smelling the blanket Bonny was wrapped in. PAULO searching the place, finds framed photos of BILLY and MARTY and BILLY and HANS, all happy.

CHARLIE

What do we do now, Paulo? I'm at my wits end now. I just don't know what to do.

PAULO

First we speak to Mari, see what else she knows, where they might've got to...

INSERT - MARI dead and going blue on her couch, COPS milling around. END INSERT.

PAULO

If she don't know then we're gonna just have to wait till they get in touch. Bonny ain't no good to them dead.

CHARLIE

Please, Paulo, don't say 'Bonny' and 'Dead' in the same thing, please, I'm already finding it difficult enough to cope...

PAULO

I'm sorry, Charlie...

CHARLIE

Why do people have to be like this?
I don't know...

PAULO hands CHARLIE three or four packs of playing cards. CHARLIE flips thru them; every Jack of Diamonds is missing. CHARLIE hugs the dog blanket closer to him, shaking his head.

CHARLIE

The guy's a fucking psychopath.

INT. BILLY'S CAR - NIGHT

BILLY driving, MARTY beside him, HANS and Bonny in the back-seat sleeping.

MARTY

He's so calm. Man, if I'd just had my wife murdered, I think I'd be...

BILLY

Angry.

MARTY

Yeah.

BILLY

Furious.

MARTY

Yeah.

BILLY

That's Hans, man. He's a proper Christian. Y'know, a proper old-time Christian. Not like these fucks nowadays, y'know?

(pause)

I feel bad, man. I kinda feel like all this was my fault, y'know? I . . . kidnapped the guys dog an' all.

MARTY

Come on, Billy. How could you've known it was that psycho's dog?

BILLY squints a little guiltily - MARTY doesn't see it.

BILLY

Hey, how was that old guy with the rabbit?

MARTY

Interesting.

BILLY

Yeah? So the ad I put in was a good idea after all, huh?

MARTY

I don't know if this was a good idea.

MARTY plays a few seconds of the 'Kaya is a bitch' tape.

BILLY

Are you mad at me, Marty? I was only trying to get you out of a horrible relationship with a bitch.

MARTY looks him over. Smiles.

MARTY

You wanna help me write 'Seven Psychopaths', Billy?

BILLY

Are you being serious?!

MARTY

I thought I could bounce some ideas off ya, you could tinker around with some bits and pieces, we could see how we go?

BILLY

I would love that, Marty. I would love that. Wow!

(pause)

So what's happening with the Jack o' Diamonds guy in the movie? I like that guy.

MARTY

I've kinda lost track of that guy a little.

BILLY

Well maybe I could help writing about that guy, try to get inside his brain. Cos I think he's gonna be one of your best characters. I really do. I think he's gonna be really really really good.

MARTY nods, smiles. Slightly.

MARTY

You know what? I think I'm gonna stop drinking til the movie's done.

BILLY's even more happy.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

BILLY, with map, getting directions from BARMAN to the Joshua Tree National Park. MARTY and HANS at a booth, a couple of soft drinks between them.

MARTY

You don't drink, Hans?

HANS

Not really.

(pause)

Billy has some Peyote I might try later, though.

MARTY

Oh. Is that a good idea?

HANS shrugs, has a drink.

MARTY

I'm really sorry about your wife, Hans. But I guess she's in Heaven now, right?

HANS

Do you believe in Heaven?

MARTY

(pause)

Not really.

HANS nods. An uncomfortable pause.

MARTY

I'm not sure what I believe, y'know? I put a lot of Heaven and Hell stuff in my stories, but I'm not sure what I believe.

HANS

Why don't you tell me one of your Heaven and Hell stories, Martin?

MARTY

Billy said he didn't think you'd like 'em much.

HANS

I like stories.

MARTY

Okay, let's see. This is a kind of a Heaven and Hell one. Well, it's more of a Hell one. It's about this Quaker Psychopath...

HANS smiles, sits back to listen more comfortably.

MARTY

...And it goes like this...

INT. BAR - LATER

BILLY returns to HANS and MARTY, just in time to hear...

MARTY

And this went on for twenty straight years until the Killer finally went mad, yet somewhere in his mental mind he recalled, from some Catholic tract he'd read, that the only ones sure to go straight to Hell are those who die by their own hand...

BILLY

Stop!

MARTY

And he took out a...

BILLY

Stop!

MARTY

Cut-throat razor... What, Billy?

HANS is smiling, both at the story and BILLY's discomfort.

HANS

Yeah, what, Billy?

BILLY

I just... don't think it's a... very nice story, that's all.

HANS

I like it. I wanna know what happens at the end. Carry on, Martin, please.

MARTY

Yeah. So... The killer took out a cut-throat razor and he looked out his window and the Quaker was still out there, looking up. And as the killer cut his throat from ear to ear he whispered... "Now are you happy, old man? Now are you happy?" And the very last thing...

HANS

And the very last thing...

MARTY

That the Killer ever saw...

HANS

That the Killer ever saw...

MARTY

Was the old man take out a cut-throat razor of his own...

As MARTY speaks, HANS slowly undoes his cravat...

MARTY

Put it to his own throat...

HANS' cravat slips off. MARTY stares at the horrific wound.

HANS

And slice?

MARTY stares, nodding, dumb-struck.

HANS

That's a very good story, Martin!

MARTY, mouth agape, looks over at BILLY, who just looks away.

BILLY

I told ya not to tell him no stories, didn't I? 'Specially that fucking one.

INT. BILLY'S CAR - NIGHT

BILLY driving, Bonny on the passenger seat, looking out at the strange windmills that litter the desert countryside. In the back, HANS is still amused, MARTY disconcerted.

HANS

Some of the details of your story aren't exactly right, of course. I mean, I wouldn't necessarily call myself a psychopath, y'know? And, uh...

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

INSERT - DOCTORS patching HANS' spurting neck, as HANS tries to stop them doing so.

HANS (V.O.)

I didn't go to Hell, obviously. I don't know if he did. Yet.

EXT. SUMMER MEADOW 1950 - DAY

INSERT - a repeat of the Summer Meadow scene (Page 11), but the dead DAUGHTER in the white dress picked up and carried into the church by the MAN IN HAT is black.

HANS (V.O.)

Our daughter was black. I don't think you mentioned that...

I/E. VARIOUS - DAY/NIGHT

INSERT - in repeats of various images of the MAN IN HAT following the KILLER (outside the prison yard, on foggy, lamp-lit streets and, creepily, standing in the KILLER's room looking down on him as he sleeps) are HANS and MYRA.

HANS (V.O.)

And I wasn't on my own the whole time, following the guy. You couldn't do that kinda work all on your own, y'know?

The KILLER wakes. The couple have gone. INSERTS END.

INT. BILLY'S CAR - NIGHT

MARTY

What was it like? All those years?

HANS

Kinda dull. Murderers tend to be kinda dull. But it had to be done. Or... I thought it had to be done. I'm not so sure any more.

BILLY

Of course it had to be done. He killed your kid. You had to fuck him over by any means necessary.

HANS

Well, as Gandhi said...

BILLY

Oh you guys! If it ain't Gandhi,
it's Jesus! Christ!

HANS

As Gandhi said, 'An eye for an eye
leaves the whole world blind'. I
believe that.

MARTY nods. BILLY thinks about it a while.

BILLY

No it doesn't. There'll be one guy
left with one eye. How's the last
blind guy gonna take out the eye of
the last guy left with one eye? All
he has to do is hide. Gandhi was
wrong!

MARTY smiles, looks the gentle HANS over.

MARTY

Hans? I'm trying to right a
screenplay about the kind of things
you're talking about. Would you
like to help me write it?

BILLY

What?! You said I could help write
it.

MARTY

We can all help write it.

BILLY

He doesn't even wanna help write
it! His wife's just died!

HANS

I don't mind helping. As long as it
isn't going to be too violent.

BILLY

Of course it's going to be too
violent!

MARTY

That's the whole point I told ya
twenty times, Billy! I don't want
it to be violent! I want it to be
decent and life-affirming.

BILLY

Life-affirming, schmife-affirming!
It's about seven fucking
psychopaths! Well, it will be, when
you come up with another seven
fucking psychopaths...

MARTY

No, you know what I think the movie
should be... The first half should
be like a perfect set-up for a pure
out and out revenge movie;
violence, anger, all the usual
bullshit. The limpy-legged dog'll
even be in it. And then... I dunno,
man. The lead characters should
just... Yeah, just like this. They
should just walk away. Just drive
off into the desert, pitch a tent
somewhere pretty, and just talk.
For the rest of the goddam movie.
No shoot-outs, no pay-offs, no
nothing. Just human beings talking.

BILLY

Just human beings talking?

MARTY

Yeah.

BILLY

No shoot-outs?

MARTY shakes his head.

BILLY

(sighing)

Well, I guess it's your fucking
movie, man. I guess it's your
fucking movie.

They drive on, passing the Welcome Center of the Joshua Tree
National Park. A little way in they pass a strange, beautiful
rock formation, 'the bobbly outcrop', admiring its
strangeness as they pass.

BILLY

Wow. Now, if you were going to have
a shoot-out, that'd be the perfect
place... I know, I know, we're not
gonna have a shoot-out! I'm just
saying. Jeez!

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Early blue dawn in the National Park; animals, insects, flowers; stunning nature awakes on another blue-skied day, amongst which a tent has been pitched.

A little way away sits HANS, watching the black skies turn to blue, a half a screenplay on his knees, a photo of MYRA in his hand. The car is parked close by.

INT. TENT - DAY

MARTY, in a sleeping bag, is awakened by the scritchety-scratch of pencil on paper. BILLY is sitting there beside him, writing away, Bonny helping.

MARTY

What are you doing?

BILLY

I'm writing about the Jack O' Diamonds. I'm calling him the 'Jack O' Diamonds', like the Jack O', apostrophe, Diamonds'.

MARTY

Oh. Has he killed anybody else yet?

BILLY

Unbeknownst to everybody he's just shot his girlfriend in the stomach but for all the right reasons.

MARTY

Oh.

BILLY

Oh, hey Marty? I know you said 'No shoot-outs' and I think that's a good idea, but, er, can I have, like, one shoot-out? One itsy-bitsy little shoot-out?

MARTY

Why don't you have one itsy-bitsy little shoot-out, Billy? Knock yourself out.

BILLY

Can I have it in a cemetery?!

MARTY sighs, nods, gets up.

BILLY

I won't let you down, Marty!

BILLY continues writing, scritchety-scratch.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

MARTY surveys the beauty of the dawn. Goes over to HANS, who's looking off into the distance.

HANS

Why do we all keep killing each other?

MARTY

Huh? Oh,... Fuck, I don't know, Hans. Most of us don't. Most of us just try to get along.

HANS

I've been reading your movie.

MARTY

Uh-huh? What do you think?

HANS

Well, your women characters are awful. None of them have anything to say for themselves. All of them are either girlfriends or wives. Most of them get either shot or stabbed to death within five minutes. And the ones that don't probably will later.

MARTY

Well, it's a hard world for women, y'know? I guess that's what I'm trying to...

HANS

Yeah, it's a hard world for women. But most of the ones I've met can string a sentence together.

MARTY

The 'Kaya' character can string a...

HANS

Oh, the fucking bitch?

MARTY

(smiles)
Didn't you like anything in it?

HANS

I do like it, Martin. I think the characters are quirky, I think the situations are intriguing, I want to know what happens next. It's very sellable. But I wouldn't call it life affirming.

MARTY

I think anything made with brains and heart is life-affirming, no matter how black the subject matter. No matter how badly written the women characters are, or if they get shot a lot.

HANS

(smiles)

Hey, I'll tell ya who I'm intrigued by! This Vietnamese priest with the gun and the hooker. Is it like a dream sequence?

MARTY

No, no, dream sequences are for fags. No, that priest guy, I know his story ain't gonna end up in nothing but carnage and horror, so I didn't even wanna get it out of my head. See...

INT. VEGAS HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Repeat image of the VIETNAMESE PRIEST on the edge of the bed, priest attire, gun in hand, neon blinds, staring into space.

MARTY (V.O.)

See, he's not even a priest. I just like the image of a Vietnamese guy in a priest's outfit and a snub-nosed .44. It's cool. Anyway, his story is...

A thought bubble appears above the VIET PRIEST'S head, in which the following image appears, and which we move into...

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

With machete and flame-thrower in hand, in an insane ball of fury, the VIET GUY, in Vietcong attire, kills a number of MARINES...

MARTY (V.O.)

He was in the Vietcong for many years, a brilliant warrior but a sicko, a psycho. And when the war was ended...

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EXT. VIETNAMESE ROAD - DAY

The VIET guy, eyes dead, trudges a rural road. His village appears distantly. He smiles, eyes lightening a little. As he approaches, the VILLAGERS he passes look at him gloomily, then look away. The VIET loses his smile. As he enters his village we see its signpost reads...

MARTY (V.O.)

...he returned to his little farming village, with all intentions of leading a peaceful life with his wife and daughters. But the little farming village he came from was called...

...MY LAI..

MARTY (V.O.)

'My Lai'...

EXT. VIETNAMESE CEMETERY - DAY

The VIET, eyes dead again, stares down at the graves of his wife and daughters.

MARTY (V.O.)

And his wife wasn't there any more.
And his daughters weren't there any more.

INT. PLANE - DAY

The VIET, staring straight ahead, doesn't acknowledge the STEWARDESS's polite questions.

MARTY (V.O.)

And he ventured to the States, to track down all the members of Charlie Company still living, who raped and butchered his family. You see where I'm going with this?

INT. BLEAK ROOM - NIGHT

VIET washing the blood off his hands in sink. A 'Be All That You Can Be In The Army' poster on wall above a bloodied bed, from beneath which two dead feet protrude.

MARTY (V.O.)

Well, he'd already slaughtered six of them by the time he got to Vegas...

EXT. VEGAS STRIP - NIGHT

Past happy couples and families enjoying the pyrotechnics walks the VIET, acknowledging nothing, taking in nothing. He enters his hotel, a board outside which reads 'VEGAS STARLIGHT WELCOMES 'C' COMPANY'.

MARTY (V.O.)

Where some kinda convention was being held, on the rights and wrongs of the Vietnam War, we'll say it's set in the eighties...

EXT. VEGAS HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Dozens of dynamite sticks around a belt at his waist which he adjusts, looking at himself in the mirror...

MARTY (V.O.)

And he's got with him a big bomb...

LATER. On bed, he dials a number, says the word 'Hooker'.

MARTY (V.O.)

...that he's gonna strap to a hooker and send her into the middle of this peace convention.

Pull back from this image; leaving it in a thought bubble that disappears above the VIET's head, as he sits there, the HOOKER in her panties, hands on hips, bemused.

MARTY (V.O.)

And this is where we meet him the night it's gonna happen, and the hooker's there in her panties, and, like I say...

The VIET reaches inside his jacket for his gun.

MARTY (V.O.)

There ain't no way that story's gonna end but grimly.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The two of them have been joined by BILLY.

BILLY

That's a great fucking psychopath, Marty!

MARTY

Yeah, it's not what I really want to be writing about, Billy.

BILLY

Uh-huh? New idea, Marty. How about we change the title from 'The Seven Psychopaths' to 'The Seven Gay Guys Who Are All Disabled But Have Overcome Their Disabilities And Are All Really Nice To Everybody'? How about that?

MARTY

Mm. Doesn't really scan.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Various quiet desert stuff and sunset, all the guys writing separately, happily.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

Eating around the fire, BILLY shuffles together the screenplay pages he's been writing that day.

BILLY

Okay, here we go. Everybody comfortable? 'Exterior. Cemetery. Night.' The Shoot-out!' Yay!

MARTY rolls his eyes.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

The hooded JACK O'DIAMONDS with Bonny on a leash waits amongst tombs in the chill night.

BILLY (V.O.)

The Jack O' Diamonds is waiting there with Bonny, he's arranged to give the dog back to its rightful owner and have this entire thing end, cos all he really wants is peace. Y'know, like Gandhi or Jesus. Or that other guy. Anyway, he's waiting there for the Mafia Boss, who's agreed to show up alone and unarmed, but guess what...

SLOWMO - Out of the darkness bursts CHARLIE, PAULO and HENCHMEN, guns a-blazing...

MARTY (V.O.)

Wait a minute, wait a minute...!

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

MARTY

First off, how the hell has this Jack of Diamonds guy...

BILLY
Jack O' Diamonds.

MARTY
How the hell has this Jack O'
Diamonds guy ended up with Bonny?
We don't even know who he is.

BILLY
I dunno, Marty. You're good at plot
stuff, you figure it out.

MARTY
And, two, surely he knows the Mafia
boss is a psycho. Why would he ever
believe he'd show up alone and
unarmed?

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

SLOWMO. CHARLIE and HENCHMEN enter blasting again. The JACK
O' DIAMONDS returns fire as best he can.

BILLY (V.O.)
Uh... You're right! Maybe the Jack
O' Diamonds was expecting to get
double-crossed, cos y'know what? He
just happens to have brought a
coupla friends along with him...!

Suddenly, from out of the tombs and mausoleums all around, a
gun in every hand, burst ZACH, MAGGIE, HANS and MARTY (with a
pencil and notepad instead of a gun)...

BILLY (V.O.)
Suddenly, from out of the graves
all around, a gun in every hand,
burst the Serial Killer Killers,
the Quaker Psychopath, you, you're
there, but you're just there to
observe, you don't believe in
killing, that's fine, nobody thinks
you're a coward, but everyone else
is firing - Purrgh! Purrgh!

All return fire bar MARTY, who takes extensive notes.

BILLY (V.O.)
- even the Quaker guy, he's
realised there comes a time for
every man with guts to take a stand
against evil. The Vietcong guy,
even he's showed up, he was hiding
up a tree...

The VIET, hiding in a tree, hops down, gun and flame-thrower
blazing...

BILLY (V.O.)

It's started raining now,
Splisssh!! Lightning! Even Kaya's
there...

KAYA appears, calling out MARTY's name in tears.

BILLY (V.O.)

She's come to say sorry to ya, and
that she loves ya, and that she
didn't mean to be such a fucking
bitch. You tell her to stay back!

MARTY screams, as KAYA gets hit by twenty bullets at once...

BILLY (V.O.)

Too late! She's the first to buy
it. Purrgh! Her head almost comes
off! You scream out her name as she
dies, "Kaya!!"

As her head bursts open, MARTY collapses to his knees in the
rain, screaming.

BILLY (V.O.)

You throw your notepad away. Art
can wait! Now's the time for a man
to be a man! The Jack O' Diamonds
tosses you an Uzi, you catch it one-
handed and take up the fight.

The JACK O' DIAMONDS tosses MARTY an Uzi, he catches it one-
handed and takes up the fight.

BILLY (V.O.)

The woman from the Serial Killer
Killers, she fought good but she's
the next to croak...

MAGGIE gets shot to pieces and dies in ZACHARIAH's arms.

BILLY (V.O.)

She dies in Zachariah's arms. Ahh.

MARTY (V.O.)

And where are you in all this,
Billy?

The JACK O' DIAMONDS makes a couple of cool shooting moves, a
la Travis Bickle.

BILLY (V.O.)

Huh?

MARTY (V.O.)

How come you're the only one not
there when all this is going on?

BILLY (V.O.)

Where am I? Uhh... That'd be a little crass, wouldn't it? Sticking myself at the centre of your story? Anyway...

The JACK O'DIAMONDS dives thru a hail of bullets to protect Bonny and place her somewhere safe, but in doing so JACK gets badly hit, he's almost dead. ZACHARIAH dies valiantly, his rabbit hopping away...

BILLY (V.O.)

Purrgh! The old guy gets hit...

The VIET gets hit...

BILLY (V.O.)

The Vietcong guy gets hit, but he's so good, with his dying move he throws his Nunchaka's, kills two of the bastards! Ching! Ching!

But with his dying move he throws his Nunchaka's, kills two of the bastards...

MARTY (V.O.)

Nunchaka's are Japanese...

BILLY (V.O.)

So the only ones left are you...

MARTY runs out of bullets...

...and Hans.

HANS runs out of bullets. CHARLIE, PAULO and the three surviving HENCHMEN advance, guns at the ready, sniggering, and are just about to shoot when...

BILLY (V.O.)

And the Jack O'Diamonds! Who was just a bit injured, he wasn't dead at all!!

The JACK O'DIAMONDS blazes away from where he fell, drawing the Mafia fire...

BILLY (V.O.)

He blazes away, he gets hit again...!

And gets hit again. HANS and MARTY open fire with their quickly reloaded guns. The Mafia boys go down...

BILLY (V.O.)

But he's distracted 'em enough for
you and Hans to finish the job!
Blam! Blam! Blam! Blam!

CHARLIE is the last to fall, the JACK O'DIAMONDS firing the
killer bullet thru his stupid face. HANS and MARTY kneel
beside the dying JACK O'DIAMONDS, holding him in their arms,
mouthing the following stuff...

BILLY (V.O.)

And as the Jack O'Diamonds dies in
their arms he whispers "We did
good, didn't we, Marty?" Thru your
tears you say "Yeah, Jack, we did
good." Then he says "All I ever
wanted was to be your friend. I'm
your friend now, ain't I, Marty?"
You say "You're my best friend,
Jack. You're my best friend." Then
the Jack O'Diamonds dies.

The JACK O' DIAMONDS dies.

PAN UP over the bloodstrewn cemetery and off into the pretty
blue skies.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

MARTY doesn't really know where to even begin his critique
for the expectant BILLY.

MARTY

That's the end?

BILLY

Yeah.

MARTY

Don't I take off the Jack O'
Diamonds' mask.

BILLY

No.

MARTY

Oh.

(pause)

So, we never see him out of his
mask for the whole thing?

BILLY

No.

MARTY

Oh.

(pause)

So who was he?

BILLY

Just some guy.

MARTY

Oh.

(pause)

Just some guy who wanted to be the
Writer's friend for no reason.

BILLY

Yeah. Well,.. no, he thought the
writer was a very good writer, so
he wanted to help him out. In any
way he could. By any means
necessary. Yeah.

MARTY

Oh.

BILLY

So what do you think?

MARTY

Well, it's very... Uh... It's
very...

BILLY

Moving?

MARTY

(thinks)

Moving...? Moving...? Maybe not
'moving' as such...

BILLY

I like the fact that the hero dies
at the end; and that the second
hero, he's so in touch with his
femininity he can even cry about
it, y'know? It makes the whole
thing, for me, much more... life-
affirming.

MARTY

It's good, Billy. I'm not totally
sure it's exactly the way I want
the ending to go, y'know, but we
can work on it, yeah?

BILLY

Of course, Marty. It's just the
first draft.

(MORE)

BILLY (cont'd)

Of course we'll work on it. In fact I'll go work on it right now. Why don't I just go work on it right now? Why don't I just do that?

BILLY goes back into the tent, irritated. MARTY is getting a migraine.

INT. CAR - DAY

MARTY and HANS driving thru the beautiful desert.

HANS

I liked it. I thought it was very much in keeping with the rest of the movie.

MARTY

I need aspirin. Or vodka.

HANS smiles. MARTY checks the glove box for no particular reason - there's nothing in it.

EXT. SMALL TOWN STREET. - DAY

Small desert town of Twenty-Nine Palms. Leaving a store with groceries, MARTY sees a stack of newspapers and is horrified. He points it out to HANS.

On the cover is a photo of BILLY beside a photo of MARI, beneath the headline 'ACTOR SOUGHT IN FIFTH 'JACK OF DIAMONDS' SLAYING'.

MARTY

"LAPD yesterday issued a warrant for the arrest of William 'Billy' Bickle, an unemployed actor, in connection with the shooting deaths of five members of the Charles Costello crime family, the most recent of which, Mari Lackey, Mr Costello's long-term girlfriend, was found shot to death in her Hollywood apartment Saturday night. Fingerprints on a Jack of diamonds playing card found beside the body is said to match those found at all of the previous slayings."

They look at each other a while, sickened.

INT. BAR - DAY

Sitting, numb, newspaper in front of them, nursing orange juices, MARTY looks over all the booze behind the bar.

HANS

Says here the neighbours say he was seeing this girl for months.

MARTY

I thought he was making it up. I thought he was living in his own little dream-world.

HANS

Well, he is, I guess.

MARTY

Hans? Billy's a fucking psycho.

HANS

I guess he's made it into your movie then.

HANS finishes his juice and leaves with the groceries. Once he's gone, MARTY gestures to the BARMAN.

MARTY

Hey buddy? Sell me a bottle of bourbon, will ya?

BARMAN nods, finds a brown paper bag.

INT. CAR - DAY

HANS driving thru the desert as dusk falls, MARTY quiet.

HANS

How much booze did ya get, Marty?

Surprised at being caught out, MARTY, finally, doesn't give a shit.

MARTY

Not enough.

He opens his bottle and drinks. They drive on, the night getting darker, strange shadow cacti on the sunset skies.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

The car pulls up, BILLY looking terribly sad.

BILLY

(tearful)

I thought you'd gone and left me.

HANS

What'd you think, that we'd just leave you out in the desert to die?

BILLY laughs at the insanity of the idea. MARTY gives HANS a look like it's not a bad idea, as he takes out the bourbon.

BILLY

Er, Marty? Is that what I think it is?

MARTY

Er, if you think it's a bottle of bourbon then yeah. You want some?

BILLY

You'll forgive me if I refuse to partake in your return to alcoholic oblivion.

MARTY

Sure, I forgive you.

MARTY takes a slug of bourbon.

BILLY

(to HANS)

Are you not gonna say something?

They all, even Bonny, await HANS' response.

HANS

Where's the peyote, Billy?

BILLY

(cheering up)

Oh, are we gonna have a peyote party?

HANS

Why not?

BILLY

Like in a Sam Shepard play?

HANS

I guess.

MARTY

(confused)

There's no... There's no such play.

BILLY

Don't you start, man! I'm still aggrieved about this bourbon business.

MARTY

Be aggrieved. Be very aggrieved.

BILLY takes out his peyote. There's shitloads.

BILLY

Well, I can see we're not gonna be salvaging your screenplay tonight!

MARTY sits down by the fire. BILLY eats some peyote, gives some to HANS.

BILLY

And I'd just written ya a real cool twist too.

MARTY

Uh-huh? What was that, genius?

BILLY

That Zachariah guy, the Serial Killer Killer? The twist is, Billy, the friend character, me, made up his entire story! Found some guy in an ole folks home, looked up a coupla things on the internet, gave him sixty bucks to tell ya the story, hired a rabbit, bing! You've got yourself a whole nuther psychopath, courtesy of yours truly! Two psychopaths, if you include his nutty wife!

MARTY

Is this true?! You made it up?!

BILLY

Well, the twist is, maybe I did, and maybe I didn't! I'm not gonna tell ya either way! Hah!

MARTY looks at him a long while, then takes another drink.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - LATER

Half MARTY's bourbon is gone, he's getting maudlin. BILLY and HANS' peyote has kicked in, they're seeing stuff. HANS idles off into the darkness, his torchlight all that's visible of him moving to a nearby ridge. MARTY has another drink.

MARTY

I'm sorry if I haven't been a very good friend to you, Billy.

BILLY

You've been a good friend to me, Marty. What are you talking about? You've been the best friend a boy could ever have. What's the matter? Is this one of your maudlin/alcohol things?

MARTY

Why did you kill all those people?

BILLY

Huh?

MARTY

Why did you kill all those people?

BILLY looks at MARTY a long while.

BILLY

Well, like I told you at Kaya's party, I killed all those people to spur you on a little bit and give you something to write about and get you to finish your screenplay.

MARTY

Like you told me... when?

BILLY

Like I told you at Kaya's... party. I was wondering why you hadn't said anything all this time! You forgot that too, huh? Jeez.

Once again, BILLY has left MARTY totally dumbfounded.

EXT. DESERT RIDGE - NIGHT

Campfire in background, HANS is sitting shining his torch along the dust and gravel. It hits a chair leg a couple of feet away, then the real leg of the person sitting on it.

Hans slowly raises the torch-beam to reveal MYRA, sitting there looking down on him, covering up her plump nakedness with her arms. There's a bullet-hole in her head.

HANS

Myra?

MYRA

Wendy ain't here, Hans. She ain't here.

HANS

Wendy ain't there?

MYRA

There ain't nothing here. There ain't no heaven here. It's just a room, with nothing in it. With just all grey in it.

HANS

Maybe it's just a waiting-room,
Myra. Before...

MYRA

We was good people for so very very
long, Hans. And it didn't even
matter. And it didn't even matter a
damn.

HANS

It did matter.

MYRA

It's just grey. It's just grey.

MYRA slowly looks away. HANS switches the torch off, then on
again. MYRA and the chair are gone.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

BILLY is looking at his right hand, intrigued, obviously
seeing something we're not.

BILLY

You won't say anything to Hans
about it, will ya, Billy? I think
he'd probably just get upset.
Y'know, what with all his Quaker
shit.

MARTY

He'd get upset?! I'm upset! I'm
upset!

BILLY

Well I'm upset you've started
drinking again! How about that?!

MARTY

What has that got to do with
anything?!

BILLY

A lot!

MARTY

Billy, you shot a girl to death two
days ago.

BILLY

Oh, did she die? I thought she
might be okay. I called an
ambulance.

MARTY

You shot her in the stomach, Billy!

BILLY

Well that's better than the head,
ain't it?

MARTY

Well, not really, no!

BILLY

I said I was sorry, didn't I?

MARTY

Jesus! I can't believe you told me
about this at the party. Fuck man,
that's fucking terrible. Maybe...
Maybe I am an alcoholic. Maybe I am
an alcoholic if I could forget
something like that...

BILLY

Okay, listen, I didn't tell you
about it at the party. I was just
kidding around. That'd be crazy,
telling you I killed a buncha
people at a party! You might've
told someone, got me in trouble.

MARTY

Then why did you just tell me you
told me?!!

BILLY

Well, to make you think a little
more seriously about your alcohol
issues. How about that, Marty?

MARTY

Billy! You kill women!

BILLY

I killed a woman.

MARTY

Well, I don't hang out with people
who kill women, Billy, and y'know
what? I certainly don't write
screenplays with them.

BILLY

(tearful)

What? What are you talking about?

MARTY

You'd best pack the tent up, Billy.
We're heading home. It's over.

BILLY

But the 'Seven Psychopaths', Marty!

MARTY

I ain't even writing a movie called 'Seven Psychopaths' any more. I'm writing a movie called 'The Tale of the alcoholic writer who bumbles around forgetting lots of shit but is quite content despite all that because he doesn't have a murderous fucking idiot as his best fucking friend'!

BILLY

(tearful)

That's a terrible title!

MARTY

I'll live with it!

MARTY starts walking towards HANS' flashlight away on the distant ridge. BILLY picks Bonny up and cradles him, tearfully watching MARTY disappear into the dark.

EXT. DESERT RIDGE - NIGHT

HANS shines the torch in MARTY's eyes as he approaches.

MARTY

Jesus!

HANS

My wife is, uh, she's sitting on a chair some place. In some grey place. I thought she'd be in Heaven, but she ain't. No. She's sitting on a chair with a bullet in her head. I'd've thought they'd've cleaned that stuff up.

Now MARTY has two crazies on his hands...

MARTY

Uhh... maybe, uhh, maybe you've just taken too many uhh hallucinogenic drugs tonight, Hans?

HANS

This is nothing to do with the hallucinogens.

MARTY

Okay. But you've just seen your dead wife on a chair with a bullet thru her head.

HANS

In some grey place.

MARTY

In some grey place. England?

HANS

Worse than that.

MARTY

Wow. Listen Hans? What say we talk about this on the way back home. There might be a perfectly reasonable explanation to all this.

HANS

Yeah there might be a perfectly reasonable explanation to all this. Like there ain't no fucking afterlife!

MARTY

That'd be one explanation, but not the first that springs to mind...

SUDDENLY the car that's two hundred yards away down the ridge explodes in a massive ball of flame. Stunned, horrified, MARTY and HANS rush down to it.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

The car is totally engulfed in flame as MARTY and HANS get to it. BILLY is nowhere to be seen, and the flames are so dense it's impossible to see if anyone is inside.

MARTY

(screaming)

Billy?! Billy?!

BILLY (O.S.)

In the tent, Dumbo.

MARTY and HANS turn, and see BILLY and Bonny's heads poking out thru the tent opening. BILLY beckons them over.

BILLY

Now don't get mad.

MARTY

What did you do?!

BILLY

I set the car on fire.

MARTY

Well how the hell are we going to get home now? We're in the middle of the fucking desert, Billy!

BILLY

That's the least of our worries.

MARTY

(quietly, worried)
What else did you do?

BILLY

I'll give you a clue...

BILLY holds Bonny up gently, taps his nametag (with CHARLIE's number on it) and mimes making a phone call.

BILLY

Come on inside. I'll tell ya all about it.

BILLY goes back inside the tent. MARTY looks at HANS, dumbfounded. Blue dawn creeps the dead horizon behind them.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Fire still burning outside, the three men sit cramped inside: MARTY has his head in his hands, looking down at the three guns on the ground between them, one labelled 'BILLY's gun', one labelled 'MARTY's gun', one labelled 'HANS' gun'.

BILLY

So, yeah, I just called up old Charlie and I told him exactly where we were and to come down and get his dog back and I told him if he had any problems finding us, just look out for a Buick all on fire, but I got him to promise to come down alone and unarmed, and he promised, and I believed him, so he'll be here in about two hours. I've labelled these guns up for ya but it's okay, you don't have to use them, I know you have qualms and I won't think you're pussies. I'm gonna hang onto mine, though. Cos I think we've done enough of this 'talking in the desert' schtick, don't you? I do.

BILLY pockets his own gun.

BILLY

This movie ends my way.

BILLY winks, leaves the tent with Bonny.

MARTY

Well that's just fucking great! Oh great! That's just fucking great!
(MORE)

MARTY (cont'd)

Great! Oh that's just fucking great! You know what that is? You know what that is? That's just fucking great!

MARTY takes a drink. HANS is looking at the guns.

MARTY

How far is the walk to the Welcome Center?

HANS

Twenty miles maybe?

MARTY

You wanna try?

HANS

I can't leave him.

MARTY

You're not gonna fight!

HANS

Of course I'm not gonna fight. But I'm not gonna run.

MARTY

So what are you gonna do?

HANS

Guess I'm gonna die.

MARTY

Friends don't make their friends die, Hans.

HANS

Psychopathic friends do. You're the guy thought psychopaths were so interesting, Marty. They get kinda tiresome after a while, don't you think?

HANS picks his gun up between two fingers like it's diseased and leaves the tent. MARTY looks at the final gun, goes to drink. Stops. Puts the cork back in.

EXT. DESERT - DAWN

Blue dawn. BILLY and HANS looking at something, Bonny running around. MARTY approaches from the distant background, the car still blazing.

BILLY

Hey Marty. We just seen a giant some kinda gerbil thing...

MARTY punches BILLY hard in the face.

BILLY

What was that for?!

MARTY

For getting us all killed, Billy!

BILLY

(crying)

You fucking alcoholic bastard,
Marty!

HANS

You might want to stop drinking,
Martin, if this is the way you're
gonna behave.

MARTY

(apoplectic)

"If this is the..?" This guy has
just telephoned a psycho-killer to
come fucking psycho-kill us, this
guy is doubting a lifelong belief
in the afterlife because of a
psychedelic cactus he just fucking
ate, and you motherfuckers are
telling me to behave?!!

BILLY

Time out, time out! What's all this
about doubting the afterlife, Hans?
What the Hell's he talking about?

MARTY sits on the ground, drained. Bonny stands in his lap.

HANS

I just met Myra up on the ridge.
She had some things to say.

BILLY

What things?

HANS

Things about where she is now.

BILLY

Where is she now?

HANS

Nowhere good.

BILLY

It's the Peyote, Hans, what are
you...

HANS

It was Myra, Billy.

BILLY

No, no, it might've sounded like Myra, but you know why?

HANS

Why?

BILLY

Now don't get mad, but I snuck up there on ya a little while ago and I pretended to be Myra. I was just kinda fooling around. Marty'll tell ya.

MARTY looks up at the lying BILLY, who makes an almost imperceptible gesture for him not to say anything.

HANS

No you didn't...

BILLY

Yeah I did. I sat up there, I was doing her voice, I thought 'The amount of stuff this guy's taken, he's gonna think I'm her! It'll be a hoot!'

HANS

Good try, Billy.

BILLY

Marty? Didn't I go up there and you didn't know what I was doing?

HANS looks at MARTY for an honest response. MARTY looks between the two, conflicted.

MARTY

Yeah. You went up there, I didn't know what you were doing...

HANS

So what did you say to me?

BILLY

Huh?

HANS

What did you say to me when you were up there?

BILLY

I just said all kinds of crazy stuff. Like...

(MORE)

BILLY (cont'd)
there wasn't any afterlife, that
being dead was kinda crap, all that
type of stuff.

HANS
Specifically. What did you say
about the place you were in, the
place Myra was in. How did you
describe it?

BILLY fishes for an answer he doesn't have...

BILLY
Er... I just said it was, er... all
kinda... I dunno, I just said it
was all kinda... grey?

HANS stares at BILLY, who isn't sure if his guess has worked,
until...

HANS clenches a fist for the first time in his life. BILLY
sees it. With all his power, HANS calms himself, unclenches
his fist, and walks away towards the horizon. BILLY wants to
call out to him but can't. There are tears in his eyes.

MARTY looks at BILLY with newfound respect. BILLY shrugs.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

HANS storming away, MARTY catches up with and stops him,
BILLY and the burning car in the far background.

HANS
How could he do that to me? How
could he do that to Myra?

MARTY
He's a nut, Hans.

HANS
He really crept up there and did
that?

MARTY nods.

MARTY
We can't just leave him there to
die, Hans.

HANS
You can do whatever you want to do,
Martin. You're a grown man, aren't
you?

HANS tosses him his gun and continues walking away. MARTY
stops, looks between the two - BILLY far behind him, HANS
striding away in front. Torn, he tries to decide - should he
stay or should he go?

EXT. DESERT - DAY

BILLY sitting at a Joshua tree. Footsteps up to him. It's Marty. HANS is far-off now, and getting further away. MARTY gives BILLY his and HANS' guns, sits down.

MARTY

How many guys you think he'll bring with him?

BILLY

He said he'd come alone.

(pause)

A coupla dozen? He sounded pissed.

(pause)

Pretty good guess, huh, Grey?

Pretty good guess?

MARTY

You knew it had to be something shitty. Grey's the obvious choice...

BILLY

Brown's the obvious choice! Grey was a stroke of genius!

MARTY

(pause)

You're alright sometimes, Billy.

BILLY, thrilled by the compliment, surveys his desert.

BILLY

The desert's even more pretty, isn't it, when you're just about to fucking die. Ha.

(pause)

Hey Marty? If you really ain't gonna be doing any shooting, maybe you should go with Hans, see he gets back safe?

MARTY

(shrugs)

I'll see how this plays out.

BILLY

Maybe we should phone Zachariah to come down, get him to bring along his missus?

MARTY

Hey, was Zachariah a real guy or did you make that stuff up too?

BILLY
(smiles)
Made that stuff up too.

MARTY smiles, looking his strange friend over. HANS has disappeared into the distant horizon.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

MARTY passing time, scared, checking the horizon for cars, observing nature. He sees that gerbil thing. It was big.

BILLY idles, Bonny in arms, guns in hands. The car fire is petering out some. He pours more gas on it. That helps.

LATER. The tent has been taken down. MARTY uncorks the bourbon with a pop. BILLY gives him a look. MARTY gives him a look of 'Don't fucking start'. BILLY smiles. MARTY drinks.

BILLY
Where is this fucking guy? He's taking forever...

MARTY
Maybe he got lost...

BILLY has already pressed redial.

MARTY
Don't...! What are you...?

BILLY
Charlie? It's Billy. Where the hell are ya? Cool. Well, just take a right at the Welcome Center, turn off at the sign for the Hidden Valley, like I said, and keep driving dead ahead til you see something on fire, that's us. Hey, you're still alone and unarmed, right? Yeah, right.

(hangs up)
Yeah, he went wrong at the windmills, the fucking idiot. Be twenty minutes.

MARTY nods, scared. Has some whisky. BILLY seems quite happy and content, looking at some trees.

BILLY
That dead tree looks like some kinda ghost of a sheep got trapped in it, something. If ya look at it. Ghost of a something with eyes, anyway.

MARTY

Maybe I should call Kaya?

BILLY

C'mon, Marty! And say what?

MARTY

Well, goodbye, maybe?

BILLY hands MARTY his phone.

BILLY

Well don't tell her any of this was my fault cos you know she doesn't like me.

MARTY dials. Finally it's picked up.

MARTY

Kaya? Are you okay?

KAYA'S VOICE

Didn't I ask you not to call me again, Martin, and no, I'm not okay if you must know, I'm still pissed at you.

MARTY

Well... I'm sorry that you are, honey...

KAYA'S VOICE

You broke my fucking heart, you know that...?

MARTY

Well... I'm sorry about that, Kaya...

BILLY

Hang up on the bitch!

MARTY

You didn't see any newspapers yesterday, did you?

KAYA'S VOICE

No, I was round at my Mom's.

MARTY

Oh yeah? How's your Mom?

KAYA'S VOICE

She's glad I'm not with you any more, that's for sure.

MARTY

Well she never really liked me in the first place, did she?

KAYA'S VOICE

How dare you say that about my Mom?! She was always lovely to you! She always welcomed you into her home!

MARTY

Kaya, I just called to say goodbye, okay...?

KAYA'S VOICE

Tell me how my Mom was not a decent person to you. Tell me one instance where my mom...

MARTY

Kaya? You're Mom was a fucking bitch the whole entire time we were going out...

BILLY smiles.

KAYA'S VOICE

What did you just say?!

MARTY

Your Mom was a bitch, you were a bitch. You two should go open a goddam bitch-college together, go lecture to bitches on how to be a goddam fucking goddam bitch.

KAYA'S VOICE

(long pause)

Have you been drinking again?

MARTY quietly hangs up.

BILLY

(all innocent)

So how's she doing...?

MARTY

Don't you say a fucking...

A convertible suddenly appears distantly, speeding towards them.

MARTY

...word.

As the car speeds closer we see it's being driven by CHARLIE. Alone.

MARTY

He's all alone. What the hell's he
all alone for?

The boys scan the dusty horizon - there are no other cars coming. The convertible slows and stops a hundred yards away from them.

CHARLIE gently opens the car door, raises his hands above his head, gets out, and turns all the way around, showing he's completely unarmed. He slowly advances about ten paces, hands still raised, then stops and slowly turns around again to show even more clearly he's unarmed.

A shot rings out. BILLY has just shot him in the back.

CHARLIE collapses, blood pouring from him. Marty is aghast.

MARTY

You shot him in the back!

BILLY

Of course I shot him in the back! I
was aiming for his spine!

MARTY

The guy was unarmed!

BILLY

The guy was unarmed my ass!

BILLY goes over and checks the stunned CHARLIE for weapons.

BILLY

Where's your guns?

CHARLIE

You said don't bring none.

BILLY

You didn't bring a gun to the big
final shoot-out? Bullshit!

BILLY searches CHARLIE's car, throwing out its junk but not finding a single gun.

CHARLIE

He told me don't bring none. So I
didn't bring none. Who are you?

MARTY

I'm just Billy's friend.

CHARLIE

Well your friend's a fucking nut!

MARTY

Well you kill old fucking women!
You're hardly a fucking pilates
instructor!

CHARLIE

I was upset over my dog!

BILLY

Found it, motherfucker!

BILLY comes out of the car carrying a plastic flare-gun,
which still has its price tag on it.

MARTY

It's a flare gun, Billy!

BILLY

You can do a lot of damage with a
flare gun.

MARTY

To an albino!

BILLY

Why the hell are you packing a
flare gun, fucker?

EXT. WELCOME CENTER -DAY

HANS, sweating, tired, finally sees the Welcome Center up
ahead. He keeps on walking, and as he hears it he sees...

A black car parked there, PAULO and four HENCHMEN leaning
against it, scanning the desert skies, some with binoculars.

HANS stops in his tracks as he recognises them. They're armed
to the teeth, but they haven't seen him yet. He stands there,
not knowing what to do. He checks inside his jacket for
something. It's still there. Finally, PAULO turns, sees and
recognises HANS. PAULO takes out his gun.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

CHARLIE is getting dizzy from the blood loss.

CHARLIE

You should always bring a flare gun
to the desert. In case you get
lost.

BILLY

What are you babbling about?

CHARLIE

Can I have my dog back now?

BILLY

No you can't have your dog back now.

CHARLIE

You promised! I came unarmed!

BILLY

You brought a flare gun.

CHARLIE

He's not being fair, is he?

MARTY

Don't drag me into it!

CHARLIE

I think I'm gonna die.

BILLY

Well don't keep going on about it.

CHARLIE lays back dizzily in the dust, blood oozing.

MARTY

Billy, we've gotta get him to a hospital.

BILLY

(double-take)

Are you out of your alcoholic fucking mind!

EXT. WELCOME CENTER - DAY

HANS standing there in front of PAULO and HENCHMEN.

PAULO

Put your hands up.

HANS

(pause)

No.

PAULO

(pause)

What?

HANS

I said 'No'.

PAULO

(pause)

Why not?

HANS

I don't want to.

PAULO

But I've got a gun.

HANS shrugs.

PAULO

Well... Where are your friends?

HANS

I don't know.

PAULO

You do know.

HANS

Well shoot me then.

PAULO can't work out this kind of behaviour. A local cop car slowly pulls into the Welcome Center, parks some distance away. PAULO quietly hides his gun behind his back.

HANS eyes the cop car, his options having opened up a little.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

MARTY has loaded CHARLIE into the passenger seat of the car.

BILLY

Oh this is just great! You're fucking unbelievable!

MARTY

We can't just let him bleed to death.

BILLY

We totally can!

MARTY

Well I guess that's the difference between you and me, Billy.

BILLY

You say that like it's a good thing!

CHARLIE

I ain't leaving without my dog.

MARTY can't believe CHARLIE, takes a slug of whisky.

BILLY

This is the type of person we're dealing with. Listen up, nutwhacker, it's you or your fucking dog. You'd better choose.

CHARLIE

Well, I gotta choose me, don't I?
Cos if I'm dead I ain't gonna have
a dog anyway...

BILLY

That's exactly right...

CHARLIE

And if I'm alive I can still come
back here and get my dog and blow
your goddam head off, can't I?

BILLY

That's exactly right. With your
flare gun.

CHARLIE

Oh, can I have my flare gun back?

BILLY

No you can't have your flare gun
back.

MARTY finishes the whisky, tosses the bottle, starts the car.

CHARLIE

What, is he drinking and driving?
What is he, an alcoholic?

MARTY

(to BILLY)
I'll be back for you.

BILLY

Take a gun. Just in case.

MARTY shakes his head, drives off at speed, leaving BILLY
there, Bonny under one arm, flare gun in the other hand.

BILLY

(to himself)
That was the worst big final shoot-
out I've ever fucking seen.

The car is almost out of sight. BILLY looks at the flare gun.

BILLY

Why would he only bring a flare gun
to the big final shoot-out?

BILLY thinks a moment, smiles, and fires up a flare, which
bursts high in the darkening skies.

BILLY

Yeah, I know why.

BILLY smiles at the beautiful flare.

INT. CHARLIE'S CAR - DAY

As the car passes the bobbly outcrop, CHARLIE sees the flare, uncertain what to do now, agitated. MARTY sees it too, and starts getting a little tense himself.

EXT. WELCOME CENTER - DAY

PAULO and HENCHMEN see the flare and freeze. The two COPS are still lolling beside their own car, chatting to some girls. HANS looks at the distant flare, looks at the distant cops, looks at PAULO.

PAULO

You got a gun?

(pause)

You ain't got a gun, have you,
Quaker?

PAULO signals for the HENCHMEN to slowly get back in the car.

PAULO

You'd better get out of the way,
old man.

HANS smiles, then suddenly reaches inside his jacket as if going for a gun. PAULO reacts instantly, pulling his own gun and shooting HANS in the chest, knocking him down.

The echo reverberates as HANS falls.

The COPS pull their guns as PAULO jumps into the car and it speeds off in the direction of the flare, cop-bullets bouncing off it.

As it passes the fallen HANS, PAULO sees what he'd been reaching for - just some pages of writing paper.

Blood trickles from HANS' mouth as the car gets away and the COPS stop shooting at it. HANS' eyes are curiously bright and happy, as he lays dying.

HANS

(quietly)

It isn't grey at all. It isn't grey
at all.

As one of the COPS radio's for back-up, the other races to HANS and checks his pulse.

COP

He's dead.

We see, written in bold on the pages in HANS' pocket, the words 'MARTIN - DOES THIS HELP?'

EXT. DESERT ROAD - DAY

MARTY speeding along the desert road, sees PAULO's gun-laden car approaching.

MARTY

Ah shit.

MARTY slows and stops - there's nothing else he can do.

CHARLIE

Shoulda brought that gun along, buddy.

MARTY

Don't believe in 'em.

CHARLIE

In guns? You don't believe in guns? They ain't fucking leprechauns. What are ya fucking talking about?

CHARLIE takes the keys out of the ignition.

MARTY

I was trying to save your life, man.

CHARLIE

It's a flesh wound, you fucking idiot. Don't you know anything about anything?

PAULO's car screeches up; he and HENCHMEN jump out, guns ready. CHARLIE gestures at them to chill out and come over.

PAULO

Are you okay, Charlie?

CHARLIE

Gimme my gun.

PAULO does so. CHARLIE goes around to MARTY's side of the car.

PAULO

The cops are coming, Charlie. We had to kill that Quaker guy.

MARTY begins to seethe, crying. CHARLIE watches, enjoying it.

CHARLIE

Don't you wish you had a gun now?

MARTY doesn't respond.

PAULO

Where's the other guy?

CHARLIE

Down the road a ways. With my dog.

PAULO

What are we gonna do?

CHARLIE points his gun at MARTY, but simply gestures with it for him to move over. MARTY does so. CHARLIE gets in the driver's seat.

CHARLIE

Gonna go get my dog.

CHARLIE starts the car and speeds off. The others hurriedly jump in their car and speed after it.

INT. CHARLIE'S CAR - DAY

MARTY, grim and moody, as PAULO's car catches and follows closely.

CHARLIE

What are you in such a sour fucking mood for? I coulda just killed you just now, couldn't I? You've only had one friend killed. Yeah, you're just about to have another friend killed, but that's still only two friends. I've had four of my guys killed and my one girlfriend killed. That's five friends killed. That's three more friends killed than you've had killed. So don't gimme that sour fucking face, okay sulky?

CHARLIE smacks MARTY across the face with his gun, just as the cars pass the bobbly outcrop. MARTY sees something up amongst the boulders, glinting. He smiles.

Suddenly a shot rings out from the rocks, blowing the brains out of the driver of the second car, which careens off the road, CHARLIE narrowly swerving to avoid it. It smashes into the boulders and turns over, windows smashing, gas spilling.

EXT. BOBBLY OUTCROP - DAY

With Bonny tied to a tree behind him, BILLY continues firing at the bloodied HENCHMEN scrambling out of the upturned car. CHARLIE's car skids to a stop further up the road.

The HENCHMEN return fire from behind the car. The injured PAULO scrambles out of it on the blind side and dives behind the boulders there, realising the car is spilling gas.

PAULO

Get away from the car! Get away
from the car!

BILLY can't figure out why he's shouting such a thing, then realises why he's shouting such a thing, and shoots the gas tank. The car explodes in a ball of flame, killing all the HENCHMEN, PAULO showered in blood and flames.

BILLY surveys the carnage. It's almost as cool as the Shoot-out in the Cemetery! He tosses a number of Jack of Diamonds towards the corpses, then stops and retreats behind his boulder as he sees CHARLIE approaching along the road, a gun to MARTY'S head.

CHARLIE sees the bloody PAULO is the only one left alive...

CHARLIE

Nine fucking friends dead, now!
Throw your fucking guns down or the
alcoholic gets it.

BILLY, almost out of sight, tosses a gun down, then another.

CHARLIE

And the other one!

BILLY

I only had two!

CHARLIE

Man, I saw you with three!

BILLY

Marty, didn't I only have two?

CHARLIE jams the gun into MARTY'S neck. BILLY tosses the third gun down. PAULO gathers them up and moves up beside CHARLIE, guns trained on BILLY'S boulder.

CHARLIE

Now get down here with my fucking
dog.

BILLY

Are you gonna let Marty go if I do?

CHARLIE

Yes I'm gonna let Marty go if you
do.

BILLY

Cos he didn't have anything to do
with this. He's just writing a
movie.

CHARLIE
(to MARTY)
Are you writing a movie?

MARTY
Yeah.

CHARLIE
What's it called?

MARTY
'Seven Psychopaths'.

CHARLIE nods approvingly - good title.

BILLY
Okay, I'm coming down. I was just
trying to buy some time cos I had
to reload something.

BILLY slowly comes out from behind the boulder with Bonny in
his arms and the flare gun stuck deep in it's poor mouth.

BILLY
You forgot about the flare gun, you
idiot.

CHARLIE doesn't know what to do. PAULO's guns are trained on
BILLY but they both know a shot is too risky.

BILLY
Marty? Walk away.

MARTY
They killed Hans, Billy.

BILLY takes a moment to process the info.

CHARLIE
I didn't kill him.
(points at PAULO)
He killed him. Kill him if you're
gonna kill anybody, don't kill my
dog.

PAULO lowers his guns, thinking 'Who the fuck am I working
for?'

BILLY
Marty. Go home. Go home and write
it all up.

CHARLIE allows MARTY to extricate himself from him, his
focus, and his gun, on BILLY and Bonny. MARTY, sadly, backs
away towards the car.

MARTY

Come with me.

BILLY shakes his head.

MARTY

What are you gonna do?

BILLY smiles, and gently slips a Jack of Diamonds inside Bonny's collar. MARTY gets in the car.

CHARLIE

Please. He's just a dog.

MARTY starts the car, looking back at BILLY all the while, shaking his head.

BILLY

Hey Marty? I told ya this movie ends my way.

BILLY fires the flare gun off in Bonny's mouth, blowing its entire head off in a blazing ball of phosphorescent flame. MARTY speeds away, knowing he can't help, not wanting to witness BILLY's death.

The horror-struck CHARLIE can only watch as Bonny's headless body catches alight, becomes too hot for BILLY and is dropped in the dirt. BILLY sticks his bottom lip out.

BILLY

Guess I blew the head offa your dog, huh?

CHARLIE strides up to BILLY sticks his gun in his mouth and pulls the trigger. His gun jams again. MARTY'S car is out of sight. CHARLIE takes his gun out of BILLY's mouth and tries to fix it, PAULO covering BILLY.

BILLY

(sighing, irritated)

Come on, man. I've done my job. Do yours.

Sounds of sirens wailing as cop cars appear on the horizon. CHARLIE's gun unjams. He sticks it in BILLY's mouth. BILLY gazes up happily at the beautiful blue desert sky, and, just as the police arrive on the scene, CHARLIE blows BILLY's happy head off.

INT. MARTY'S CAR - DAY

CHARLIE's gunshot reverberates as MARTY speeds away thru the desert, choked up, tearful.

EXT. BOBBLY OUTCROP - DAY

The fire on Bonny's body petering out; the beautiful blue skies behind BILLY's bloody body; the cops putting CHARLIE and PAULO in cuffs, PAULO's mind on jail, CHARLIE's on his dead dog.

CHARLIE

Don't just leave him out here.

COP

Forensics boys'll pick him up soon.

CHARLIE

Not...

CHARLIE sighs as he's put into one of the cars.

EXT. WELCOME CENTER - DAY

HANS' corpse dead in the gravel. MARTY, in tears, brushes past a PARK RANGER who's trying to keep GAWPERS back. He kneels beside the body, ties his cravat up neatly, then notices the papers in HANS' pocket and quickly slips them into his own.

MARTY walks away from HANS, from the RANGER, from the GAWPERS, as other cop cars pull up. Joshua trees silhouette the sunset horizon.

HANS (V.O.)

Dear Martin, well, I ain't any kinda screenwriter, as you know, but I've been kinda trying to come up with some sorta solution to your Vietcong Psychopath conundrum, and gosh, y'know, I think I may've found one...

INT. VEGAS HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

VIETNAMESE PRIEST sitting alone, sweating profusely.

HANS (V.O.)

So there's this Vietnamese guy, and he's in this hotel room in Vegas...And he's sweating. He's sweating like hell, he's burning up. He takes out from his pocket a .44, checks it's loaded, puts it away.

VIET checks gun and puts it away.

HANS (V.O.)

I don't know why he checks it's loaded.

(MORE)

HANS (V.O.) (cont'd)
Surely he's the one who loaded it?
Anyway, a hooker comes out of the
bathroom...

A HOOKER comes out of the bathroom in a red dress.

HANS (V.O.)
In a beautiful and sexy red dress.
And she says to the Vietnamese man,
"Would you like to make love now,
or should we have an intelligent
conversation instead?" She says
"I've been reading a lot of Noam
Chomsky lately, what do you think
of him, I think he's a marvel..."
The Vietnamese guy doesn't really
have anything to say to that.
Y'know, he's Vietnamese! He doesn't
know what the Hell she's talking
about! So, anyway, you said you
wanted some sex in it, so they're
having sex...

INT. VEGAS HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The VIET guy and the HOOKER having sex, both still clothed.
The VIET uncertain about it all. A ghostly voice in his head
calls out...

GHOSTLY VOICE
Cease, brother. You know this will
not help us.

The VIET stops. Sits at the edge of the bed. HOOKER touches
his shoulder tenderly. He shakes his head, sniffing the air,
rocking back and forth strangely.

HANS (V.O.)
He sniffs the air. He says in
Vietnamese the single word...

VIETNAMESE PRIEST
(in Vietnamese, subtitled)
Gasoline.

HANS (V.O.)
The hooker, she studied Vietnamese
at Yale, she says...

HOOKER
(in Vietnamese, subtitled)
I don't smell gas.

The VIET stops rocking, can't smell anything any more. He
takes out his gun.

HANS (V.O.)
He says...

VIETNAMESE PRIEST

You will.

He grabs her by the arm, grabs the dynamite belt and takes her outside.

EXT. VEGAS GAS STATION - NIGHT

The Vegas Strip in background, the HOOKER by the arm, the dynamite around her, VIET steals a can of gasoline. The GAS ATTENDANT protests. VIET points gun at him. ATTENDANT backs off. Heading off, the VIET is perturbed to see the lettering on the gas can is in Vietnamese.

INT. VEGAS HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Massive theme lobby of a major Casino/hotel. VIET pushes the HOOKER thru, gas can in hand, mesmerised, disturbed by the garish colors, the displays of theatrical wonder.

HANS (V.O.)

He drags her to the place where the convention's being held, she's got the dynamite tied to her, he's got the gas in hand...

INT. CONVENTION ROOM - NIGHT

They burst into the convention room. All the uniformed SERVICEMEN inside turn and look at them, smile, usher them in, then turn away again. The VIET doesn't enter, but pushes the HOOKER in.

HANS (V.O.)

He pushes her into the room full of ex-servicemen. She backs away into the middle of the room, petrified.

She slowly backs away from him into the middle of the SERVICEMEN, shaking her head.

HANS (V.O.)

He pours the gas out into the room.
It reaches her feet.

The VIET lets the gas pour out til it slowly creeps around the feet of everyone in the room, all oblivious to it, apart from the HOOKER.

HANS (V.O.)

A little of it has splashed over himself.

VIET sniffs the gas on his sleeves...

HANS (V.O.)

It doesn't matter. He takes out a match. In perfect Vietnamese the hooker whispers to him...

HOOKER

(in Vietnamese, subtitled)
Cease, brother. You know this will not help us.

CLOSE ON the VIET as he lights the match and closes his eyes.

HANS (V.O.)

He lights the match. He closes his eyes. Then he opens them again.

The VIET opens his eyes.

HANS (V.O.)

He ain't in Vegas any more. He's sitting in the middle of...

EXT. SAIGON STREET- DAY

The VIET, in the robes of a Buddhist monk, is sitting in the middle of the street, drenched, an empty can of gas beside him (its lettering all in Vietnamese).

HANS (V.O.)

...a street in Saigon circa 1965, in the orange robes of his Buddhist order, a hundred men and women, monks and marines all around him...

A hundred ONLOOKERS, amongst them faces from the Vegas convention, the GAS ATTENDANT, the 'HOOKER', look on in horror.

HANS (V.O.)

...and he's drenched himself in gasoline, and as he finally manages to push the thoughts of anger and hate out of his gentle mind, a fellow monk pleads with him one more time...

FELLOW MONK

(in Vietnamese, subtitled)
Cease, brother. You know this will not help us.

HANS (V.O.)

And he smiles, and, all hateful thoughts finally dispelled, the first ever monk to burn himself to death to protest the war, whispers "It might. It might", and lights the match.

The VIET lights the match, smiling serenely, and bursts into flames. The ONLOOKERS turn their faces away, the 'HOOKER' crying. The VIET rocks back and forth in pain as he did on the hotel bed, as we slowly fade out...

HANS (V.O.)

So, y'know, your Vietcong Psychopath story becomes the final thoughts of a gentle monk who, y'know, chose not the darkness but the light.

EXT. DESERT - DUSK

MARTY sitting reading, dusk falling.

HANS (V.O.)

'The light' being, y'know, suicide by self-immolation, but I think that's the best we're gonna get. And I know you said dream sequences are for fags, but, I dunno, I think it could work, don't you? We gotta dream, don't we?

MARTY smiles slightly. Shots of various remnants of their desert time; the burnt out car, the 'sheep' tree, animals, insects, beautiful nature at harmony once more. FADE OUT.

INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

MARTY types the words "beautiful nature at harmony once more. FADE OUT. END"

He stacks the page with the others behind the 'SEVEN PSYCHOPATHS' title page and places the script down on his desk, on which an unopened bottle of wine awaits.

He gently touches the water-droplets on the bottle's chilled outside. He doesn't open it. There's a framed photo of himself and BILLY beside the script. He smiles at it.

EXT. LA RESTAURANT - DAY

One year later. MARTY and KAYA at table, the WAITER taking the end of their order.

WAITER

And anything to drink, Sir?

MARTY

Just a mineral water please.

KAYA notes this. The WAITER leaves. They sit there a moment, taking each other in.

MARTY

You're looking well, Kaya.

KAYA

You too, Martin.

MARTY

Yeah? I've been kinda tired lately.
Had some late nights.

She arches a brow.

MARTY

No, not those kinda late nights. I
just been working late. I haven't
had a drink since they died.

KAYA

Good for you, Martin

MARTY

I ain't an alcoholic or nothing.
I'm just taking a break for a
while, y'know?

KAYA

I went to see your movie last week.

MARTY

I wondered why you'd got in touch.

KAYA

It's good, Marty. It's good.

MARTY

I just wish Billy was still around
to see it, you know? Half of it's
his, really.

The WAITER brings their drinks, leaves.

KAYA

Is that really what you think of
me?

MARTY

Hah?

KAYA

The girlfriend character. Is that
really what you think of me?

MARTY

It's just a character, Kaya.

KAYA

Martin, you didn't even change her fucking name.

MARTY

Well,... I like your name.

KAYA

How come you never mentioned the girlfriend character was paying the writer character's rent the entire time he was writing? How come you never mentioned it was me who subsidised your time and your wine and your entire fucking life.

MARTY

You can't put everything in a movie, Kaya, there's time constraints.

KAYA

Ohh!!

MARTY

You just said you thought it was good!

KAYA

Some of the shoot-outs were good, and I liked the dog. I didn't especially like being referred to as a fucking cunt and a fucking bitch and a fucking whore.

MARTY

I didn't refer to you as a fucking whore!

KAYA

How do you think my Mom felt when she saw that?

MARTY

You took your Mom to see it? You took your Mom to see a movie called 'Seven Psychopaths'?

KAYA

Yeah. And how do you think she felt?

MARTY

(pause)
Upset?

KAYA

Yeah she felt upset!

MARTY

Well...

MARTY shrugs, not really giving a shit.

KAYA

Is that all you've got to say for yourself?

MARTY

(to WAITER)
Could I get a glass of Chardonnay please? You know what? Leave the bottle.

WAITER goes to get it. They stare at each other a while.

KAYA

I think this is where I came in?

MARTY

With me drinking to cope with you behaving like a bitch?

KAYA

Which came first, Martin, the bitch or the drunk?

KAYA leaves without looking back.

MARTY

(quietly)
The bitch.

WAITER comes back with the wine, pours a taste.

MARTY

You can just pour it.

WAITER pours a glass, leaves. MARTY looks at the glass for a while. Thinks about drinking it.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

CHARLIE and PAULO awaiting verdict. FOREMAN of jury says 'Guilty'. PAULO's head drops, CHARLIE doesn't even care. Hubbub in court, JUDGE gavels for them to be taken away. As the two men stand, CHARLIE seems to catch a glimpse of something or someone at the back of the court.

PAULO

What?

CHARLIE

I thought I saw something.

They're led away, CHARLIE a little disturbed.

INT. CELL - NIGHT

PAULO sitting, depressed. CHARLIE a few yards away from the cell's barred window, wanting to look out but unable to bring himself to.

CHARLIE

Paulo, go look out the window.

PAULO

Charlie, there's nothing out there!

CHARLIE

Well just go check.

Irritated, PAULO goes to the window.

PAULO

I just checked ten minutes ago!
There's nothing out there! There's
a wall, there's razor wire, there's
a lamp-post and there's a street
that we ain't gonna walk on again
for twenty fucking years. That's
all that's out there, Charlie.

PAULO sits back down, head in hands. CHARLIE slowly moves to the window, looks out. Past the prison walls, past the razor wire, beside the lamp-post on the dark street stands a MAN IN BLACK, a hat bathing his face in shadow, a cravat around his neck, and although his eyes cannot be seen, CHARLIE knows he's looking straight up at him.

CHARLIE leaves the window, sits on the bed and slowly, absent-mindedly, starts scratching below his eyes with his nails, not quite drawing blood, but almost. It's started.

INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Clock on the desk beside the photo of MARTY and BILLY reads 2AM. Sound of door opening, footsteps over to desk, on which the MAN IN BLACK's hat is dropped. It's MARTY, exhausted.

He undoes his cravat, takes off his black jacket, sits. Looks at the bottle of wine on the desk, something almost dead behind his eyes. Suddenly the telephone rings.

MARTY

Hello?

ZACHARIAH'S VOICE

Is this Martin?

MARTY

Yeah. Who's this?

ZACHARIAH'S VOICE

You promised on your life.

MARTY

Huh?

ZACHARIAH'S VOICE

You promised on your life you'd put my number up on the big screen there, and tell her I loved her, and tell her to call.

MARTY

Zachariah?

ZACHARIAH'S VOICE

Why would you make a promise like that and not see it through? Now how's she gonna find me?

MARTY

I didn't think you were...

ZACHARIAH'S VOICE

You didn't think I was what? Serious? You think I'm not serious just because I carry a rabbit?

MARTY

My friend made me think... A friend made me think you were... just a harmless old guy.

ZACHARIAH'S VOICE

Your friend must be insane.

MARTY

I'll get them to change the credits. I'll get them to put your number up.

ZACHARIAH'S VOICE

No. It's too late now. You know that. You promised on your life. And you know what that means, don't you, Martin?

MARTY

Yeah. I know what that means.

ZACHARIAH'S VOICE

I'll be seeing you very very soon.

MARTY

Are you gonna bring your rabbit?

ZACHARIAH'S VOICE

(pause)

Huh?

MARTY

Why don't you bring your rabbit?
And your fat dead wife? That's
kinda why I didn't put your number
up, Zach. She's probably dead and
buried in her big fat grave by now.

ZACHARIAH'S VOICE

She isn't fat...

MARTY

Well, whether she's fat or she
isn't fat, your dead wife sucks,
Zach.

ZACHARIAH'S VOICE

Are you some kind of fucking
psycho?

MARTY doodles on his script, doesn't respond.

ZACHARIAH'S VOICE

I'll be over to kill you on
Tuesday.

MARTY

Good. I'm not doing anything
Tuesday.

ZACHARIAH'S VOICE

What?

MARTY hangs up, takes it off the hook, lets it drone. He fans
thru a pack of Jack of Diamonds playing cards on the desk,
then looks at his script's 'Seven Psychopaths' title page
he's been doodling on.

The word 'Seven' has been crossed out and replaced by the
figure '8' followed by a question mark.

He opens the wine. He pours a glass. He toasts his script. He
drinks.

END